

The German Tribune

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Helmut Schmidt cordially welcomed in Cairo

Bonn Chancellor Helmut Schmidt was given a cordial reception in Cairo as expected. Giant photos at the airport testified, in a way nearly reminiscent of the personality cult in Communist countries, to the respect that is felt towards Helmut Schmidt in Egypt.

President Sadat invariably referred to "my dear friend the Chancellor." Egypt, he said, admires the Germans and would be on their side whatever might happen.

His visitor from Bonn was in good humour, partly of course because there are no bilateral problems to cloud relations between the two countries.

En route to Cairo the Chancellor admitted in mid-flight that a visit to Brussels and the EEC Commission usually meant much more of a headache.

In Brussels, Herr Schmidt explained, he had to steer a course midway between the Scylla of willingness to oblige and the Charybdis of Hans Apel, his Finance Minister.

There were no such problems about a visit to Cairo, he maintained. But problems of a slightly different kind nonetheless arose, due to the fact that this country, as seen from Cairo, is an economic great power.

Egypt hopes first and foremost that Bonn will help to bale it out of its economic troubles.

President Sadat immediately thanked the Chancellor for having commissioned from Alex Möller, the former SPD Finance Minister, an in-depth report on the Egyptian economy.

The Möller report has now been completed, the Egyptian leader noted, and it confirms that the fundamental economic position of Egypt is sound.

This does not strictly tally with what has so far been disclosed about the conclusions reached in the Möller report. Alex Möller, for instance, reckons an economic upswing in Egypt will be out of the question until such time as Cairo grasps the initiative on a number of issues.

Egypt, he maintains, must first put its house in order in respect of population growth and administrative efficiency before economic recovery is feasible.

Yet Cairo is bemused by the prevailing view that everything is basically sound and all that is needed is a powerful economic stimulus.



Chanellor Schmidt and President Sadat meet the Press in Cairo on 29 December (Photo: dpa)

The Egyptians have visions of this country or the European Community staging a Marshall Plan to promote and sustain economic recovery in the Middle East.

If only peace were re-established, accompanied by a powerful financial shot in the arm from Europe, Egypt would be able to bask in prosperity, Cairo seemed to feel.

Herr Schmidt devoted some time to dashing this illusion. A Marshall Plan for the Middle East is out of the question, he explained, because the comparison does not hold good.

In the immediate post-war period the economic strength of the United States was much more substantial than that of the countries of Western Europe today, while on the other hand financial assistance is by no means all that Egypt needs.

If the Egyptian economy is to stage a recovery not only cash is needed but also, not to say primarily, technical assistance and training facilities. These, however, are sectors in which Bonn has much to offer.

Cairo also needed to be put right in a number of political views that appeared widespread. Helmut Schmidt was, for instance, virtually welcomed as the president of a United Europe.

He was the first foreign visitor to reside in the pompous, 500-roomed Abdin Palace. "You, Herr Chancellor, and the

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Development aid mainly to Africa

Development aid last year went mainly to Africa, according to a review of the activities of the Economic Cooperation Ministry published in Bonn on 29 December.

The Ministry shares responsibility for 1,532 current financial and technical cooperation projects in the developing countries, while 2,667 aid volunteers work in Third and Fourth World countries.

In Africa alone Bonn is lending a hand with 712 projects, plus a further 456 in Asia, 256 in Latin America, two in Oceania and sixty in Europe.

Major projects launched in 1977 were almost invariably embarked on in Africa. They included an agricultural research station in Ghana, a polytechnical institute in Kenya, the promotion of animal husbandry in the Ivory Coast and a trade and commerce training centre in Tanzania. *ddp*

(Frankfurter Neue Presse, 30 December 1977)

IN THIS ISSUE

Third World ties to the fore in 1978

Ties with the Third World will be a keynote of foreign policy this year, says Jürgen Sudhoff of the Bonn Foreign Office.

"We see ourselves as the Third World's advocate," the Foreign Office spokesman claimed in an interview with *Die Welt*, "We shall be making every effort to encourage and extend the dialogue with developing countries in 1978."

A departmental reshuffle at the Foreign Office testifies to this intention, as does the appointment of four commissioners with special responsibility for policy on the Middle East, Africa, Latin America and Asia.

Internationally this country's readiness to cooperate in partnership and in the common interest with Third World countries is, says Jürgen Sudhoff, meeting with an increasingly positive response.

Approval is voiced by visiting politicians from abroad and at the UN General Assembly, with Bonn's participation in the bid by the five Western members of the UN Security Council to bring about a peaceful settlement in Namibia playing a leading part.

Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher is shortly to undertake a further visit to Africa, again demonstrating this country's interest in the continent.

"Asia will also come in for special attention in the foreign policy context," Herr Sudhoff continued. He mentioned visits to Asia by Foreign Minister Genscher and Minister of State Hildegard Hamm-Brücher and the recent conference of ambassadors in Kuala Lumpur.

In the year ahead Bonn will also be aiming at intensification of the dialogue between the European Community and the Asean nations Indonesia, Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore and the Philippines.

This country can be gratified with its showing at the United Nations over the past year, especially in respect of relations with the Third World.

Bonn would seem to have cut a creditable figure both as a member and as chairman of the UN Security Council. Views may continue to have differed at the last session of the General Assembly but, fortunately enough, there were no head-on clashes.

"Delegations talked with one another in a peaceful, businesslike manner," Jürgen Sudhoff says.

Foreign Minister Genscher's speech to the UN General Assembly at the end of September was well received, he continued. Herr Sudhoff was also happy to note that the General Assembly has renewed the mandate of the ad hoc committee set up to deal with this country's bid to reach international agreement on outlawing hostage-taking.

This particular problem is evidently felt all over the world to be an urgent one. Bonn has no illusions about the further course of talks in Geneva in February "but we do feel that talks and negotiations so far warrant realistic optimism," Herr Sudhoff maintains.

He regretted, on the other hand, that the draft resolution providing for the appointment of a high commissioner for human rights was not even voted on at committee stage.

"We feel an institution of this kind to be urgently necessary as a means of helping to enforce the rights of the individual worldwide," the Foreign Office spokesman concluded. *Bernt Conrad*

(Die Welt, 28 December 1977)

COMMON MARKET

Direct elections to European Parliament unceremoniously shelved

Belgian Foreign Minister Henri Simonet made sweeping use of his powers as chairman of the EEC Council of Ministers at the last session of 1977. Without so much as a by-your-leave he turned a blind eye to the agenda item "Date of direct elections to the European Parliament."

The fact of the matter is fairly straightforward. Even though Mr Callaghan had solemnly undertaken to hold elections to the European Parliament this May or June everyone knows that with the failure of the House of Commons to agree to elections by proportional representation Britain will not be in a position to elect its 81 Europeans MPs in time to meet the May-June deadline.

On 13 December Labour and Tory MPs were agreed for once, effectively shelving direct elections by a majority of 319 to 22. It was not a vote against Europe but merely against proportional representation.

Mr Callaghan had been forced to introduce the Bill by virtue of his pact with the Liberals, who stand very little chance of representation in the European Parliament by the first-past-the-post method.

But Westminster gave proportional representation a resounding thumbs down, with the result that Britain and Northern Ireland must now be divided into 81 jumbo constituencies, which will take the boundary commission time — a prospect that far from dismays anti-Europeans in the Parliamentary Labour Party.

Several months ago the French National Assembly ruled in a preamble to France's Representation of the People Act that the directly elected European Parliament is to be granted no extra powers.

So the enthusiasm and effort opinion-makers and politicians have invested in the first direct elections to the European Parliament over the past couple of years now seem out of proportion to the political influence the assembly will exert.

Several thousand would-be candidates have sought to secure nomination for the European Parliament, membership 410, which commutes between Strasbourg and Luxembourg. But what exactly do European MPs do for a living?

They formulate a viewpoint on all draft guidelines and regulations issued by the Common Market, which may then take the MPs' recommendations into account (or ignore them as it sees fit).

The European Parliament is also to have the final say on certain items in the EEC budget.

Last but not least the European Parliament is empowered to pass a vote of no confidence in the EEC Commission (as a whole, not an individual commissioner) but has no influence on the appointment of a successor to the Commission it has unseated.

The vote at Westminster provides Bonn too with a convenient opportunity of dropping the matter, since the Bundestag has not yet made provisions for direct elections to the European Parliament either.

Government and Opposition in Bonn remain unable to reach agreement on whether this country's 78 European MPs, plus three representing West Berlin, are to be elected on a national slate or on interlinked state or regional slates.

You may think it hardly matters, but this issue is at least as important in domestic terms as is the difference between the first-past-the-post system and proportional representation in Britain.

Were elections to be held using a nationwide list of candidates the Bavarian CSU would for the first time contest polls outside Bavaria, just as CDU candidates would be eligible for election by Bavarian voters.

The prospect of a fourth nationwide political party is not one of which Helmut Kohl and the CDU are enamoured, any more than are the Free Democrats.

So repeated assurances have issued forth from Bonn that a decision has long since been taken in favour of interlinked state lists, yet tacticians in none of the four parties concerned, the CDU, CSU, SPD and FDP, have shown much enthusiasm to get on with drafting the Bill.

Caution would appear to be the order of the day in other respects too. The Confederation of Social Democratic and Socialist Parties in the EEC, led by the late Wilhelm Dröscher, drew up a fine-sounding European election manifesto in preparation for the polls.

But Britain's Labour Party has now called for a revised version of the manifesto because, of all things, it is "too European."

The other main supranational party-political grouping within the Nine is the European People's Party, which includes this country's Christian Democrats (and the Bavarian CSU) but no one in Britain or Ireland and next to no one in France.

But the CSU's Franz Josef Strauss is angling both openly and behind the scenes for a European alliance of his Christian Social Union, the French Gaullists and Conservatives in Britain, Ireland and Denmark.

The CSU leader's purported objective is to to avoid coming into too close contact with the Eurocommunists via ties with the Italian Christian Democrats.

Yet the French Gaullists, certainly their right wing, are as anti-European as the Bavarian CSU is pro. And does Herr Strauss worry about this nicety? Not he.

His main objective, or so it would seem, is to use the European election campaign as an opportunity of painting the Social Democrats in this country as bosom buddies of the French Socialists and Communists with their plans for a Popular Front.

A trio of political scientists have worked out, with German attention to detail, that none of the potential political groups could, under any conceivable circumstances, be expected to command a majority in the European Parliament.

Neither a Popular Front coalition nor a combination of Christian Democrats and Conservatives could be expected to command a majority even in conjunction with the Liberals.

But such calculations tend to overlook the reality, which is that the Council of Ministers can only be expected to pay any attention to a recommendation passed by an overwhelming majority in the European Parliament.

In other words, Socialists, Social Democrats, Christian Democrats and Liberals are going to have to shoulder responsibility for a good many resolutions.

During the election campaign candidates will only have to face a single question that might prove embarrassing: whether they are in favour of high or low farm prices.

On this issue Socialists and Social Democrats in the current European Parliament were at sixes and sevens last March, with some MPs calling for a seven-per-cent increase in farm prices and others advocating a freeze.

The European Commission proposed a three-per-cent increase, while the Christian Democrats called for five per cent and the farmers' associations for seven and a half. The Council of Ministers ended up by deciding on three and a half per cent on average.

This, then, is the practice of a European Parliament and the powers it enjoys. It remains to be seen whether Willy Brandt (a busy man) or Franz Josef Strauss (provided both are as good as their word) will stand for election to the European Parliament in its new look.

The most attractive feature of the directly-elected European Parliament may well for some time continue to be MPs' salaries, one of the few rights the Parliament enjoys being that of determining the size of its own budget.

Erich Hauser

(Frankfurter Rundschau, 30 December 1977)

Denmark in the EEC chair

On New Year's Day Denmark took over the chair in the Council of Ministers in Brussels for a second six-month term. The first occasion was in late 1973, when the oil crisis exerted an unprecedented and unexpected strain on economic ties.

The Danes were newcomers to the Common Market at the time and set about dealing with the oil crisis with a will and an enthusiasm that achieved results.

The oil crisis, it subsequently transpired, was the first real trial of strength the EEC faced, and Europe, to give it credit, has since survived economic vicissitudes, waves of inflation and unemployment levels that had certainly not been experienced since the establishment of the Common Market in 1957.

Even Helmut Schmidt has lately emphasised on more than one occasion the feeling of solidarity within the EEC to which the oil crisis and its aftermath have given rise.

The Chancellor, as he himself readily admits, at one time invariably shuddered involuntarily whenever the word Brussels was mentioned.

The Danes may confidently be expected to attempt yet again to steer the EEC clear of the many pitfalls it regularly encounters.

Denmark's vice-president of the European Commission, Finn Olav Gundelach, has nonetheless been responsible for what is probably the most troublesome hurdle the Council of Ministers will have to scale this time round.

Mr Gundelach's proposals for the 1978/79 farm price guarantees constitute a bombshell that, as in the past, is sure to give the Nine a headache.

Yet expensive though it may be, the Common Agricultural Policy remains the mainstay of the Community. Without it the Nine would soon be out of joint as a Common Market.

Denmark will be sure to do its utmost to ensure that inordinate national interests do not result in the demise of the EEC's costly but indispensable farm policy.

Danish Foreign Minister Knud Andersen will chair the Council of Ministers until the end of June, when this country's Hans-Dietrich Genscher will take over for a further six months.

In a mere six months Mr Anderson can hardly be expected to put the demon of protectionism to flight, so in mid-year he will no doubt be handing over the relay baton to Herr Genscher who in his turn will try to make sure that the free-market economy is not turned turtle.

In the first quarter of this year Mr Anderson will need to try and restore order to iron and steel markets in the Nine. Will he succeed in curbing imports of cut-price steel from the Far East?

Steel may not be of particular importance from the viewpoint of Danish industrial output but it is sure to testify to the negotiation skill (or otherwise) of the European Commission and the Council of Ministers, with Denmark in the chair.

It will also be interesting to see how Denmark copes with a problem with which it is better acquainted, that of fishing within the EEC's 200-mile economic zone. A decision must urgently be reached, otherwise the Common Market may face the severest setback in its twenty-year career.

Entry talks with Greece, Portugal and Spain will prove a further test of Denmark's skill at guiding the fortunes of the Common Market.

It will be no easy task to dispel the French and Italian fears of agricultural competition and persuade the Nine that now it has agreed in principle to enlargement of the EEC a solution must be found to problems that arise in the farm sector.

This leaves us with the resuscitation and sustenance of European monetary and political union. A new face in the chair cannot be expected to work wonders here though.

With the best will in the world not even Denmark can achieve overnight these ambitious long-term objectives in the process of European integration.

Helmut J. Weiand

(Frankfurter Neue Presse, 2 January 1978)

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HOME AFFAIRS

A year some will prefer to forget

Bremer Nachrichten

The first year of the second Schmidt government in Bonn was intended to be a roaring success. The Social and Free Democrats, unhampered by local government elections in 1977, proposed to make use of their October 1976 general election victory to press ahead with effective measures even if they entailed running the risk of unpopularity.

In the years that followed, the Bonn coalition parties then envisaged capitalising on their achievements in the course of 1977. 1978 is a year in which state assembly elections are due to be held in four states, 1979 is a pre-election year and 1980, it follows, the year of the next general election.

Helmut Schmidt reckoned to have learnt the lesson of mistakes made by the SPD-FDP coalition in the Brandt era. If a government is to retain the confidence of the electorate it must continually show itself to be capable of action and, moreover, act in a manner a majority of voters can understand.

This realisation was readily accepted by the party-political leaders but turned out to be more difficult than anticipated to put into practice. The government may have known what it wanted, but tough conditions made it uncommonly difficult to implement it.

The autumn abduction of industrialist Hanns Martin Schleyer provided Chancellor Schmidt with a temporary opportunity of showing his mettle, but all other government business just did not go ahead as planned.

Unsatisfactory progress was made on issues the coalition had brought upon itself by sitting on the fence for too long, such as the trouble with pensions and pension funding.

The wafer-thin parliamentary majority on which the Bonn coalition has to rely increasingly proved to be a weak spot and a risk factor.

Endeavours to bring about economic recovery or combat unemployment failed to get off the ground. Ten-figure investment programmes proved ineffective because the coalition's Bundestag majority was insufficient to back such drastic bids to inspire confidence.

This, incidentally, is why the CDU/CSU Opposition fares so well in what it has to say about the government's performance on economic affairs, finance and fiscal policy.

The Christian Democrats busily intervened in the processes of government via the Bundesrat, or upper house, in which the Opposition parties enjoy a majority.

The Opposition may not have been able to reverse or bring about complete changes in government policy by means of its Bundesrat majority, but it did oblige the coalition to abandon policies entailing steadily growing expenditure.

The CDU/CSU also forced the government to part company with some of its plans to increase taxation in 1977. There could hardly be a context in which it is more clearly untrue to say that the Opposition lacks alternative proposals or policies.

Whether the Opposition has been given credit for these points by the man in the street is another matter, of course. There are signs that side-effects such as left-wing resistance to fiscal compromise from with the coalition's ranks have remained more clearly imprinted on the public's memory.

So Chancellor Schmidt is not alone in facing a dilemma; so does Opposition leader Kohl — the other Helmut.

Sharing government from the Opposition benches seldom pays dividends in terms of electoral gains; governments almost invariably derive greater benefit from the outcome of compromises.

The issue on which the Christian Democrats were persuaded to share most responsibility was the Schleyer affair, as a result of which an all-party crisis staff was set up.

Because of the unprecedented nature of a situation in which first a leading industrialist and then a planeload of holidaymakers were used to hold the country to ransom the Opposition felt obliged to call off its autumn offensive against the government.

But does the government show gratitude by acknowledging the part played by the Opposition in bringing the Schleyer affair, or at least the hijacking of a Lufthansa jet to Mogadishu, to a successful conclusion?

Not it; with the course of time the Social and Free Democrats have made out the Opposition's contribution to be steadily less significant, while the legislation jointly inaugurated with a view to combating terrorism in future has been cut down to size as it is put through the mill by the coalition.

So it does look as though cooperation between government and Opposition on the Schleyer case has been forgotten, which is the thin end of the wedge as far as the Christian Democrats are concerned.

But the truth of the matter is that the Schleyer kipnapping and Lufthansa hijacking testified to the Chancellor's essential weakness, his lack of a safe parliamentary following.

The shape of legislation to come can no longer be foreseen, whatever the subject, because there is too much discussion and vacillation on the government benches.

Often the Social and Free Democrats have to chivy along a single MP, whose scruples or misgivings could make all the difference between victory or defeat in a parliamentary vote.

So both the government and the Opposition must surely agree that 1977 has been an unsatisfactory year in almost every respect.

Peter Hopen

(Bremer Nachrichten, 29 December 1977)

Schmidt in Cairo

Continued from page 1

European Community" was a recurring form of address, leaving little doubt that Helmut Schmidt was deemed the only man whose influence really mattered within the Common Market.

The Chancellor tried to dispel this illusion. Apart from the section of his talks devoted to bilateral ties Herr Schmidt did his best to put the European Community to the fore.

Whether or not he succeeded in putting across to the Egyptians a more realistic view of the Germans and their head of government is another matter. "We do admire you," President Sadat spontaneously assured him.

"Never at any time in recent decades has our reputation been as great as it is right now," says a German who has lived in Cairo for many years.

It is, of course, gratifying that this country is regarded as a model of propriety, economic and otherwise, at a time when the Federal Republic of Germany is equated with visions of the Ugly German elsewhere in the world.

The other side of the coin is that Egypt cherishes hopes and expectations Bonn cannot hope to fulfil. In the circumstances this country would be well advised to scale down ties with Egypt, with all the good will in the world, to a more realistic level.

Harry Hamm

(Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung für Deutschland, 30 December 1977)

Bonn prepares for mid-term local election year

Many a political move and tactical or strategic ploy embarked on by politicians in the course of the year that has just drawn to a close was undertaken mainly with 1978 in mind.

Now it is 1978 and the party is over. Four state assembly elections are in the offing. Some eighteen million voters will be going to the polls in Hesse and Bavaria, in Lower Saxony and Hamburg.

Politics in Bonn will be unable to resist the influence exerted by this succession of mid-term local government elections that are invariably regarded as a crucial test of Federal government performance as viewed from the polling booth.

It is, of course, regrettable that both government and Opposition spend too much of their time vote-catching rather than getting on with the job.

Election campaigns in all four states will naturally be given a local look, with reference to educational policies, administrative reforms and local scandal, but basically all parties will be swayed by the course of events in Bonn.

The Bonn Opposition is anxious to fare well in the forthcoming state assembly elections and lay the groundwork for a resounding success at the polls in the 1980 general election.

The coalition parties in Bonn are similarly determined to make sure that Social and Free Democrats do well in the local government elections, which would then be taken as a vote of confidence in the Federal government.

Expectations of the four elections vary widely, however. Bavaria, for instance, does not go to the polls until mid-October, by which time three other states will have made the running. Besides, few surprises need be expected of election results in Bavaria.

Franz Josef Strauss and his Christian Social Union can be as sure as ever of a sweeping majority. Percentage variations will represent no more than a response to local considerations, such as the choice of a successor to Alfons Goppel as Munich Premier.

The Bavarian elections may not hold forth the promise of far-reaching surprises but they will at least have one repercussion in Bonn, always assuming that Herr Strauss does not change his mind yet again.

If the CSU leader takes over as state Premier he may not depart from the parliamentary scene in Bonn but he will certainly have to give up his seat in the Bundestag.

Frankfurter Rundschau

In Hamburg too the situation is fairly straighforward, there being scant likelihood of major surprises. The Social and Free Democrats between them can be sure of well over fifty per cent of the votes and are thus assured of re-election.

The city's Social and Free Democrats may have theit differences and disagreements but they are agreed on the broad outlines of policy and their Hamburg coalition is unlikely to come unstuck after the 4 June state assembly elections.

The Hamburg SPD, like the CSU in Bavaria, can rely on voting patterns so deeply ingrained among Social Democratic voters that the Opposition stands little chance of making headway.

So the parties will be concentrating their efforts on Hesse and Lower Saxony, where crucial experiments are at stake for all concerned.

Hesse CDU leader Alfred Dregger now has to prove in his home state the accuracy of his conviction that Christian Democrats can only hope to regain power by means of clear majorities and that coalition talks are a waste of time.

Herr Dregger will find the going hard, since Holger Börner, the current state Premier in Wiesbaden, has succeeded in bringing to an end the succession of news headlines about the Hesse SPD. Hesse's Social Democrats are no longer as down in the dumps as they were not so long ago.

The Free Democrats will no doubt be hardest put to convince enough voters that a vote for the FDP is still a good idea, but Liberals ought by now to be used to struggling for survival.

Lower Saxony has a special role to play inasmuch as voters will here deliver their verdict as to whether the coalition of Christian and Free Democrats has proved a success.

The outcome of this vote is equally important for both. Lower Saxony is a marginal state, with support for Christian and Social Democrats fairly evenly divided.

If the electorate gives the CDU-FDP coalition a vote of confidence in June it will strengthen the hand of Christian Democrats everywhere who argue that the way to power is to seek to reforge ties of old with the Free Democrats.

As for the Free Democrats, they may well decide on the outcome of the Lower Saxon state assembly elections whether or not to review their coalition commitments in Bonn next time round, should the need arise.

So voters who go to the polls this year will have an uncommonly important role to play, and not only come polling day. Voters would do well to try and ensure that candidates are selected by means of procedures in which the general public have a greater say than has hitherto been the case.

President Scheel recently noted that the make-up of the Bundestag and state assemblies no longer tallies with the social structure of the country as a whole.

This is surely a point worth making and voters would be well advised to press home this particular point to the political parties without delay.

Gerhard Ziegler

(Frankfurter Rundschau, 29 December 1977)

■ INTRA-GERMAN AFFAIRS

Step-by-step approach achieves gradual progress in Bonn-East Berlin ties

No matter how coincidental, three widely differing news items shed a significant light on relations between the two German States.

Bonn and East Berlin, says one of these items, have reached agreement on developing the autobahn between Helmstedt and Marienborn.

The second of these items informs us that numerous service stations are about to be established in the GDR in connection with the supply by Volkswagen of 10,000 "Rabbits" to that country. The garage mechanics working at these service stations will be trained at VW's German headquarters in Wolfsburg.

And, finally, the thord of these news items tells us that GDR Prime Minister Willi Stoph accuses the Federal Republic of Germany of applying its basic "anti-communist attitude" to foreign policy as well. The item speaks of a "vilification campaign," which is a clear reference to the human rights issue — a most sensitive topic where East Berlin is concerned.

Has the Basic Treaty governing relations between the two Germanies, which was signed immediately following the parliamentary elections of 1972, proved its worth? And if so, have the constant and enervating ups and downs of the policy of "small steps" been worth while? And what can be the meaning of any future *Deutschlandpolitik?*

The answer to these questions becomes somewhat easier if we attempt to visualise the position the Federal Republic of Germany would find itself in if had not joined the Western concept of detente, which — if we were to seek a common denominator for it — could best be summed up as follows: Security through agreement augmented by security through deterrence. It is almost certain that the German question would have been separated from the West's common policy.

Granted, as a territorial reunification issue, the German question still is and will remain "encapsulated." No-one in the West will lift a finger to promote this cause. But in the long run other options remain available — options which are usually described as "keeping the German question open."

Every German foreign minister, in agreement with the Western powers and in keeping with the Final Act of Helsinki, has a free hand at the UN to work towards peace in Europe by the terms of which the German people would be free to decide their own destiny.

In his last years in office, Konrad Adenauer stressed that freedom and self-determination must have priority over reunification. What remained open, however, is the option for Europe.

The most significant aspect of the special relations between the two German States has always been the inclusion of the GDR in the European market. Both German States have a vested interest in this inclusion.

The past five years have provided important insights into the "mechanics" of such a limited balance of interests.

Notwithstanding barbed wire and booby traps, the pragmatic policy of small steps has brought about an expansion of person-to-person contacts which would have been unthinkable only ten years ago.

This has contributed more to the preservation of the nation as a whole than could ever have been achieved by adhering to the Hallstein Doctrine of sole representation for both German states by the Federal Republic of Germany and by implacable reunification maxims.

The fact that citizens of both Germanies can learn about each other's everyday life is weightier than all dogmatic attempts on the part of East Berlin to eliminate the feeling of nationhood through ideological brainwashing. All it achieved was to demonstrate the extent to which the GDR's efforts in the fifties to depict itself as the guardian of nationhood vis-a-vis the Bonn government which it dubbed "the divider of the nation" has forced East Berlin onto the defensive.

It is true that the Basic Treaty in the final phrases of negotiations had to be made ready for signature under considerable pressure of time.

But it would be illusory to assume that it would have been possible to obtain guarantees of the recognition of the division of Germany in terms of international law.

For East Berlin this division always has been and still is an element of a double strategy. This makes it even more impossible for the Federal government to abolish the tenet of one, German citizenship.

This has nothing to do with "interference" but with human considerations of which Konrad Adenauer said as far back as 1962 that they play an even more important role than national considerations.

The conclusion of the Basic Treaty, and above all Helsinki and Belgrade, have made it easier for the Western powers and for the Federal Republic of Germany to take a stand on the human rights issue.

On the other hand, it has become more difficult for the East Bloc to cry "stop the interventionists!" every time an individual or a government points to Helsinki while at the same time openly engaging in interventionist policy coupled with the use of force (as in Prague or Angola or with the help of subsidiary communist parties in the capitalist countries).

The Federal Republic of Germany is not interested in a certain symmetry in this respect. What it wants is simply to meet its obligations arising from Helsinki to bring about human freedoms.

The human rights discussions in Helsinki and Belgrade have lent legitimacy to this issue even among the public in the East Bloc. There has been a shift in the offensive and defensive roles — and this, too, is a long-term aspect of *Deutschlandpolitik.*

Hans Schuster

(Süddeutsche Zeitung, 28 December 1977)

Direct dial telephone calls mean more in divided Berlin

Towards the end of 1877 Germany's Postmaster General ordered two of Alexander Graham Bell's telephones from the United States. They were first tested in Berlin on a line between the General Post Office and the main telegraph office some two kilometres away.

This line ushered in the German telephone system. The end of 1977 marks another milestone in Berlin — at least so far as the telephone service between the two parts of the city is concerned. The central switchboard operator at the Post Office has become a thing of the past — quietly and without fanfare.

This aspect of the German-German maze of treaties has never received much attention notwithstanding the fact that it is an important contribution towards maintaining person-to-person relations between the two Germanies.

Granted, for those West Germans who have no friends or relatives in the GDR being able to dial directly any one of 305 towns in East Germany adds little to the quality of life. But for the others, above all in West Berlin, this is a major breakthrough, especially in view of the fact that Berlin is an enclave and that all communication with the surrounding area is welcome even if this happens to be communist East Germany. For those people it means a great deal to be able to contact two-thirds of the GDR's 1,417 telephone exchanges, 645 of them fully and 376 semi-automatically.

In the latter case the connection is established manually at a West Berlin Post Office without the East German exchange having a hand in it.

But quite apart from the geographical position of Berlin, the Berliner as a personality has a communications obsession. As the satirical poet Kurt Tucholsky once put it: It is typical of the Berliner to be sitting and thinking somewhere, or perhaps just sitting, and suddenly jumping up as if stung by a tarantula and saying: 'Is there a telephone somewhere?'

In fact, if Berliners did not exist they would be invented by the telephone. In other words, they can best be summed up as creatures of the telephone.

In the light of all this it was a particularly bitter pill for the Berliners to swallow when the GDR cut the telephone links in the four-sector city on 25 May 1952, thus depriving more than three million people of their most important means of communication.

Until then West Berlin even had a telephone directory for the entire city. But since the East Berlin authorities proved unwilling to provide the necessary data (such as address, profession, etc.), every party had to be phoned officially in order to obtain such information.

At that time it was the EEC Treaties and the agitation by Radio RIAS against the East (to use GDR parlance) which led to this withholding of information. Put in a nutshell, the cold war was at its worst.

And since the West rejected the GDR offer of providing 70 manually operated lines, partly for reasons of stubborn sticking to principles and partly for fear of eavesdropping, one-third of the existing lines were subsequently severed by East Berlin and the remaining two-thirds were cut by West Berlin.

The whole thing was triggered by a bugging affair. A West Berlin postal official provided East Berlin authorities with an opportunity to listen in on a district office of the SPD in the Charlottenburg precinct. But this was no more than a pretext, the real reason being plainly the cold war.

Until the seventies there remained only a few isolated lines for the Allied forces and for a Swedish travel agency as well a line between the West Berlin Tempelhof airport and the East's Schönefeld airport.

Until the Wall was built the Berliners resorted to the "double ten-pfennig system". They collected ten-pfennig coins in both East and West German currency and crossed the demarcation line between East and West in order to telephone from a public phone booth.

13 August 1961, when the Wall was erected, was followed by ten years of telephone silence. But the pressure of more than 100,000 citizens with relatives in the other part of the city, together with the policy of detente, reversed this development and on 31 January 1971 telephone links were re-established through manual exchanges.

Every day, starting from 6.00 a.m., a couple of switchboard operators accepted bookings for the few available lines, and by 8.42 a.m. the daily quota was exhausted. Waiting times for calls amounted to many hours. Moreover, there were only half a dozen telephone directories for the other part of the city available in West Berlin. The further development of telephone communications between the two parts of the city proceeded very slowly indeed.

The GDR was unable to honour its undertaking to extend links by 31 December 1974, and there is no reason to doubt East Berlin's claim that technical difficulties caused the delay.

It was not until mid-December this year that the number of lines between the two parts of the city was increased from 240 to 300, that the limitation of speaking time was lifted and the switchboard operator made redundant.

Once the Christmas and New Year rush of telephone calls is over and the lines are no longer overburdened the newly established telephone links are likely to show record numbers of calls.

From West Berlin alone it is estimated that one million calls to the other part of the city will be registered in 1977 and that calls to the rest of the GDR will top the seven million mark.

This figure would be considerably higher if it were not for the fact that West Berlin's 900,000 telephone subscribers are matched by a mere 200,000 in East Berlin, only 80,000 of whom are private individuals.

The fact that six of the seven million phone calls per annum go to the 80,000 private telephones proves that what Tucholsky said about the Berliner and his telephone mania still holds.

Otto Jörg W...

(Frankfurter Rundschau, 23 December 1977)

■ PEOPLE

CDU Mayor Wallmann finds his feet in Frankfurt

When the Christian Democrats took over the reins of local government in Frankfurt a year ago they did so amid CDU calls to raze the Red bastion to the ground.

Frankfurt, some Christian Democrats felt, was on the brink of socialism and synonymous with policies that must be reversed.

The Social Democrats in the *Römer,* the city's brick-red city hall, made Christian Democrats see red.

For six months now Walter Wallmann has been trying to make himself at home in the Römer — a Christian Democrat at a desk previously occuped by Rudi Arndt and Social Democrats such as Willi Brundert and Walter Möller.

Burgomaster Wallmann was voted mayor on the strength of local government election gains by the CDU on 20 March 1977, but now, nearly a year later, the Christian Democrats, led in Hesse by Alfred Dregger, are gradually losing ground in the state as a whole.

So the outcome of this autumn's state assembly elections will depend to no small extent on the skill and sheer good luck of Walter Wallmann in Frankfurt, which is bound to be deemed an example of what local government would be like if the Christian Democrats were to hold the reins of power statewide.

Social Democrat Wiesbaden Premier Holger Börner and Christian Democrat Frankfurt Mayor Walter Wallmann thus enter the running as rivals inasmuch as their showing could clinch matters for either side.

Both hope to be viewed by voters as paragons of reliability and trustworthiness. In this they are drawing similar conclusions from the political misfortunes of their respective predecessors Albert Osswald and Rudi Arndt.

With the emphasis on making good past errors and omissions there is no longer any call for diametrically opposed political objectives, for a clear choice between alternative policies.

Don't rock the boat is the order of the day; the political challenge is out of fashion. That is why Rudi Arndt stood down for the Social Democrats and why Alrred Dregger has an increasingly nervous look at the Christian Democrats' helm.

The demand for explosive temperament is on the decline. Yet Walter Wallmann, who is not by inclination either a man of action at all costs or an innovator, is finding it uncommonly difficult to cultivate an image of his own.

Even when such changes as he may have in mind are only minor in nature, Herr Wallmann has discovered that his bounds are narrowly set, so much so that it is no laughing matter.

The two traditional wings of the Frankfurt CDU were always poles apart and, what with a recent recurrence of rivalry between the moderates and the nobility and bankers, the city's Christian Democrats continue to be difficult to lead.

Walter Wallmann has sought to scale down the clash by threatening to take over the party chairmanship and ensure that a consensus is agreed on, in the form of silence.

Christian Democrats have been appointed to two additional *Magistrat* portfolios but the administration is still headed, in the main, by Social Democrats, thereby virtually obliging the mayor to adopt a conciliatory tone and hedge his bets.

Hitherto Frankfurt has always succeeded in making its mark on the Oberbürgermeister rather than the reverse, regardless who happened to be in office.

This, when all is said and done, is Frankfurt, a city where all walks of society, from the middle class to alternative subcultures, boast a broadly liberal outlook.

This outlook has eventually been accepted by every previous incumbent at the Römer. Walter Wallmann is no exception; he too is enthusiastic in its praise.

Even if he were temperamentally given to experiment, Mayor Wallmann would be called upon to exercise the utmost restraint, so he has, logically enough, made a virtue out of necessity.

Walter Wallmann is scathing in his criticism of the "political Muhammad Alis," of politicians who like to flex their muscles.

Frankfurt, he claims, is "governable" — as though this in itself were a victory! You just have to try and plough your own furrow. Mayor Wallmann takes pains to express "gratitude" for just about everything; "grateful" is his favourite word.

Cheap clichés of the party-political adversary are hardly in keeping with this outlook. Take, for instance, SPD arts supremo Hilmar Hoffmann, at the mention of whose name Christian Democrats have seen red since 1970.

In terms of Hoffmann they felt able to define virtually everything they did *not* want. His concept of the arts, in particular, was viewed as anathema by the CDU.

Hilmar Hoffmann's arts policy was no longer geared to the requirements of the middle class, with its virtual monopoly on higher education and wealth.

It threw open museums, concert halls, libraries and theatres to a wider public — and did so on the basis of an unorthodox concept from which the city stood to profit.

Hoffmann's contract runs until 1982. Walter Wallmann recently welcomed him demonstratively at the Römer as the man to whom the arts in Frankfurt owe such a debt of gratitude.

Regardless whether such moves are calculated or spontaneous, they certainly confuse the municipal arts scene, which does not really have any use for the CDU.

There are reasons why this is the case, yet the impression that remains is that of a burgomaster who is "grateful" not to have been rejected out of hand.

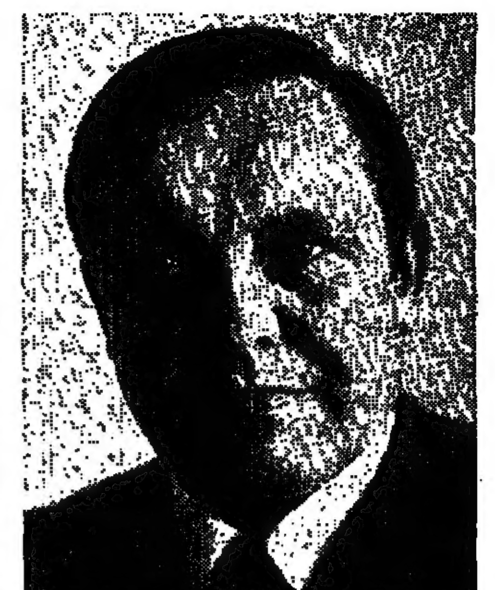
The arts scene then recalls Rudi Arndt, Herr Wallmann's predecessor as Oberbürgermeister, of whom the following tale is told.

An artist once asked Herr Arndt whether he had five seconds to spare for him, whereupon the SPD burgomaster counted slowly from one to five and then bade his interlocutor goodbye because the five seconds were up.

Rudi Arndt now says, almost ruefully, that the Social Democrats have learnt their lesson and come to accept electoral defeat as a just response to arrogant behaviour on their part.

Walter Wallmann's technique of coming to terms with all and sundry, socially beyond reproach in all situations, comes as a thorn in the flesh to his fellow-Christian Democrats too.

Yet has Wallmann the law and order apostle and friend of Hesse CDU leader Alfred Dregger suddenly become a Liberal?



Walter Wallmann (Photo: Sven Simon)

Mayor Wallmann has decorated his office in rustical *altdeutsch* style, fastidious but respectable. He still lives in a world of traditional, orderly values. A Christian outlook is his political yardstick, with Liberalism being regarded almost as a sin.

Yet Walter Wallmann would on no account like to be regarded as anti-Enlightenment, and in his case this is not sheer opportunism.

There is nothing to which he is more averse than to being regarded as an intellectual backwoodsman, a descendant of the blinkered bourgeois CDU whose political horizon of yore extended no further than to the *formierte Gesellschaft,* or orderly society, so beloved of the late Ludwig Erhard.

Mayor Wallmann claims to be a man who would like to preserve an open mind as much as possible, and where better to demonstrate this desire than in policy on the arts?

Especially, one may add, when his

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Düsseldorf banker Ludwig Poullain steps down

The resignation of Ludwig Poullain, chairman of the board of Westdeutsche Landesbank (West-LB for short), has caused unrest and consternation in financial circles.

Disregarding the advisory post which Poullain was permitted to exercise but which — be it intentionally or unintentionally — he failed to report to the board and to the administrative council, the resignation of the successful and in many instances discomfiting banker has been termed disastrous for West-LB.

In private banking circles it is feared that the resignation, combined with the recent political bid for greater control and influence in the bank's affairs by the state of North Rhine-Westphalia — which has jurisdiction over the bank — will make this country's third largest bank, with a business volume of DM75,000 million and a world-wide reputation, "drop back into provincialism."

Officialdom is still keeping mum on the events surrounding Poullain's advisory contract which is said to have paid one million deutschmarks.

The whole affair could have received the backing of the state if it had not been for the fact that Poullain's contract was concluded with Franz-Josef Schmidt, a Stuttgart broker and principal shareholder of the Ratio Construction Group, who is being investigated by the public prosecutor on grounds of fraudulent bankruptcy.

In fact, Schmidt was detained in police custody for some time and was



Ludwig Poullain (Photo: Sven Simon)

subsequently released on a DM2 million bail in order to ward off further damage to the company, which was in financial straits.

The bail was put up by Westdeutsche Landesbank which did so in order to secure another smaller credit which was of a considerably later date than Poullain's advisory contract.

Alas, the bail proved unavailing and the Ratio Group went broke.

In the course of the prosecutor's investigation of Schmidt, Poullain's name must have cropped up, and he himself is now under investigation on suspicion of bribery. The onus is now on him to prove that his contract with the Ratio Group had nothing to do with the credit granted by his bank.

When Ludwig Poullain learned of the impending indiscretions he decided that attack was the best defence and informed all stockholders except the state government. He then resigned in order to ward off damage to the bank in view of the possibility of long drawn out public disputes over this matter.

Immediately following his resignation, which coincided with his 58th birthday, Poullain resumed the vacation which he had interrupted when the affair broke. He is now on the high seas aboard his sailing yacht.

The West-LB emphatically rejects all speculation whereby it was not Poullain's contract with Schmidt but heavy losses resulting from dollar loans and induced by the nosedive which the dollar took on the foreign exchange markets which prompted him to resign. According to bank spokesmen the West-LB's foreign business is as splendid as ever.

Harald Posny

(Die Welt, 27 December 1977)

■ ECONOMIC TRENDS

Economic Affairs Minister reviews outlook for 1978

Otto Graf Lambsdorff took over the Bonn Economic Affairs Ministry last October from fellow-Free Democrat Hans Friderichs, who is now chairman of the board at Dresdner Bank. In this interview with *Die Welt's* Peter Gillies the Minister outlines economic hopes and prospects as we enter a new year.

Q: Herr Minister, the Federal government forecast growth of about five per cent and a fall in unemployment figures for 1977. Neither of these forecasts has materialised. Would you at this point venture to forecast that the growth anticipated for this year will materialise in 1978?

A: The continued backslide of the dollar makes it particularly difficult to prognosticate at this stage. But even so I am certain that the economic recovery process which, though with certain fluctuations, we had in 1977 will continue in an intensified form next year. This means that the Federal government expects a higher growth rate in real terms than in 1977. According to the information available to us at present, a 3.5-per-cent growth rate is likely. We would have every reason to be satisfied with the growth rate discernible at present if it were not for problems on the labour market. And the present rates of growth are still inadequate to bring about a change in that sector.

Q: So the Federal government, too, assumes that the unemployment figures for next year will remain around the million mark. Is unemployment to become a permanent state of affairs with which we will have to put up?

A: Not a permanent state of affairs but unfortunately I also have no basis on which to promise that we shall be able to restore full employment next year. As I see it, there is above all the danger that it will become increasingly difficult from year to year to find jobs for inadequately trained workers who lack the qualifications of a skilled worker or specialist. On the other hand, we are faced with a shortage of well-trained specialists. It is on that score that I foresee problems which will cause us a great many headaches in the future.

Q: Business, which has been looking in vain for skilled workers, has time and again expressed doubts as to the real number of jobless. How many of our million jobless are genuine in terms of human and social problems for those concerned?

A: I cannot give you any exact figures. We, too, have been told by many businessmen that there is a shortage of skilled workers and that they have been trying to employ them without being successful in their efforts. But even so, there can be no doubt as to the statistical correctness of the unemployment figures. As a result I can only appeal to our workers time and again to obtain the necessary qualifications and to make use of all opportunities for training. If they do so they will in most instances find adequate employment. For the same reason it is important that business provide enough training facilities for young people starting their working lives. The worst thing is when youngsters willing to work and to be trained find it impossible to get apprenticeships.

Q: You said that the recent dollar weakness makes it difficult to prognosticate. Can in actual fact exports act as the locomotive that can pull our economy out of the doldrums?

A: I needn't tell you how important export is for the growth of our economy. Quite apart from the dollar weakness, which worries me a great deal, I do not believe that we can, or indeed should, stake everything on exports when it comes to boosting our economy. The most important impulses must come from domestic demand and above all from investments in the private sector. We have done quite a bit to promote this by depreciation facilities in our tax legislation. And we expect that the government investment programme of last summer will swell the order books to the tune of an additional 6,500 million deutschmarks. The possibilities provided by the energy programme and the construction of a number of additional nuclear power stations which can now be approved as a result of this programme will help to overcome the investment bottleneck in that sector and will bring about technical progress — to mention just microprocessors — and this in turn will stimulate investments on the part of German business.

Q: Most experts view the forthcoming round of wage negotiations for 1978 as the key problem in boosting our economy. For the purpose of tax revenue estimates the government assumed wage increases of about 4.5 per cent. Will this become an element in the forecast for 1978?

A: In its forecast concerning tax revenue estimates the Government did not mention wage deals — nor will it do so in the annual projection for 1978 which will be passed at the end of January. But I cannot stop anybody from drawing his conclusions concerning the anticipated increase in gross wages and salaries. At this stage I am unable to tell which development of wages and salaries will be used as a basis for the projection for 1978. Although this year's wage policy will not be the only decisive factor, it will nevertheless play a very important role. We cannot afford to impose an added production cost burden on our economy through excessive wage deals. One needn't necessarily think of a wage freeze when speaking of commonsense in wage policy. The parties to collective bargaining — and it always takes two to arrive at an agreement — have largely showed such commonsense in the past.

Q: There is a clear connection between the wage level and unemployment. Can the government's observation of the autonomy of the parties to collective bargaining go so far as to induce the government to avoid all appeals for restraint? Hasn't the time come to say a few unequivocal words?

A: The parties to collective bargaining are sovereign. We can familiarise them with our own ideas and this is usually done in the annual report on the state of the economy at the very latest. They can heed these considerations, as they have frequently done, but we cannot and do not wish to force them. And anybody who knows anything about political psychology will desist from harsh public admonishment which can so easily provoke defensive reactions. The parties to collective bargaining are quite capable of putting two and two together. Since the presentation of the government's projected targets they know what we consider feasible and what not. But it would be out of keeping with the autonomy of both labour and management if we were to present them with yardsticks which would virtually of necessity be interpreted as the lower limits for wage deals. I consider it clear enough to tell the parties involved that, in the view of the Federal government, it is necessary to tread the very narrow path which would bring about the desirable boost of demand without detrimental effects on employment, monetary stability, production costs and competitiveness.

Q: The trade unions have not yet rejoined the Concerted Action. It has been said that you are trying to induce them to do so in bilateral talks. When will the next session — with all parties present — take place . . . or is the Concerted Action a thing of the past?

Otto Graf Lambsdorff
(Photo: Marianne von der Lancken)

A: The Concerted Action is not a thing of the past. The growth and stability legislation itself sees to it that it remains alive since it is codified by the legislation. But we do not want to summon the committee only because the law prescribes it. The Concerted Action is one of the major assets of our society. I cannot tell you at this stage when the next session will take place and who will take part in it. I shall discuss the matter with those concerned in January. It is no secret that the Federal government is interested in a complete body. But we are not under pressure of time. Perhaps the next session — no date has been fixed as yet — will once more take place in the form of bilateral talks. We shall know in January.

Q: Herr Minister, the end of the year is a time for stocktaking and for good resolutions. What are your resolutions and what are your wishes for 1978?

A: We need faith in the further development of our economy, and this applies to all groups. The Federal go-

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own party boasts neither an alternative arts policy nor individuals with alternative ideas.

Is is not true to say, for that matter, that the Hesse CDU badly needs a dash of Liberalism if it is to have any success whatever?

So it is that the pitched battle against the arts policy advocated by Hilmar Hoffmann has not come about. Instead Walter Wallmann revels in visions of a Frankfurt in which the arts are as much at home as the banks or capital, museums as much a part and parcel of the city scene as skyscrapers.

Mayor Wallmann may not be prepared to tolerate everything that occurs to Hilmar Hoffmann, but he is by no means unwilling to head a movement aimed at making the city a cultural metropolis.

Grass roots sentiment among both Christian and Social Democrats may view Hilmar Hoffmann and his arts policies with unease, but this does not upset the men at the top.

Walter Wallmann has, of course, made concessions to grass roots sentiment in the CDU ranks by appointing, for instance, an inspector of schools whose views are very much those of the CDU of old.

But the bounds have already been set. The CDU is gradually coming to realise that neither teachers nor parents have ever wanted a return to antediluvian educational practices.

Little remains of erstwhile plans to return municipal functions to private enterprise. Ideological considerations pale in comparison with day-to-day requirements.

Can government be brought closer to the man in the street? Even Walter Wallmann is now doubtful whether this concept can be put into practice in a city with an administrative machinery like that of Frankfurt.

Little importance is now attached to the grand words of yesteryear. Nothing has come of the fresh start voters were promised in the CDU's election campaign.

Walter Wallmann has not undergone far-reaching changes within since relinquishing his seat in the Bonn Bundestag to take over as mayor of Frankfurt. But you do tend to grow a little colour-blind in Bonn, he explains.

He can now afford a slightly greater degree of independence. It is, indeed, expected of him. Mention of the Frankfurt school (in sociology) does not conjure up visions of terrorism as far as Walter Wallmann is concerned.

Many Christian Democrats may tend to equate the views of Adorno and Horkheimer with those of campus unrest in the late sixties and the theory of the urban guerrilla, but Walter Wallmann merely remembers that he must remain on good terms with the University.

In case of doubt he reckons to decide in favour of tolerance, even where his own supporters are concerned.

Fortunately he has not been faced with decisions such as that required of Stuttgart's mayor Manfred Rommel, who disregarded CDU opinion and agreed to fulfil the last wish of Andreas Baader, Gudrun Ensslin and Jan-Carl Raspe to be buried together.

Would he have reached the same decision, however? "I would," Walter Wallmann says. Yet Wallmann is not Rommel and would not, on consideration, want to be.

But he too testifies to a little of the relaxed atmosphere in which the Christian Democrats are so lacking. Walter Wallmann is not out to erase without trace the party-political enemy. He is merely trying to administer a difficult city.

Gunter Hofmann

(Die Zeit, 23 December 1977)

■ TRADE

Exporters find the going tough as the dollar resumes its headlong plunge

As a rule our coastal people are not given to exaggeration. Only the shipowners have always depicted their economic position more bleakly than it really was.

As a result, the German Shipowners' Association will find itself in a tough spot when negotiating with the Bundesbank and exploring ways and means of overcoming the dilemma caused by the dollar weakness.

Nikolaus Schues, co-owner of Hamburg's prestigious F. Laeisz Line and future president of the Association, describes the position of the shipping business as follows: "We no longer just moan and groan. We have invested and modernised and now those of us who have indebted themselves are being penalised."

And indeed the position of the shipping business can only be termed precarious with the shipowners having to fight on two fronts. Eighty per cent of all freight contracts are concluded on a dollar basis, and even those which are based on the deutschmark are nevertheless orientated to the dollar. As a result, the dollar weakness has considerably reduced incomes in 1977. In fact, the loss caused by the dollar's nosedive amounts to DM 500 million or 10 per cent of total freight revenues.

Apart from this loss of income our shipowners have also been hit by the fact that their vessels have lost in value since they are usually assessed in dollars. In other words, a ship which originally cost ten million dollars, i.e. DM 25 million at an exchange rate of DM 2.50 per dollar would now realise only DM 17.2 million at the present exchange rate of DM 2.15 — taking into account that the vessel has meanwhile depreciated to eight million dollars.

Companies whose investments have been financed by means of ships' mortages are thus running the risk of excessive indebtedness.

There are two possible remedies under consideration by the shipowners: Diminished revenues could to some extent be offset by the introduction of a so-called "freight dollar" whose value — like that of the so-called green dollar — would be slightly above the foreign exchange rate. The difference would have to be made up from government (Federal, state or municipal) coffers. And the danger of excessive indebtedness could, according to the shipowners, be countered by refinancing.

The effect of the dollar weakness and deutschmark strength on our shipping companies is exactly as described in standard textbooks. But fortunately this does not apply to all branches of business, as borne out by the fact that notwithstanding a 44 per cent increase of the deutschmark value since the beginning of 1973, our export business has gone from strength to strength. This is attributable to two strategies:

- In order to utilise domestic production capacity as much as possible business has made price concessions on foreign markets;
- Many companies competed by means of highly developed technology, reliable deliveries, good service and presence in the buyer country rather than resorting to price cuts.

Siemens, for instance, made use of the latter strategy. Its foreign customers were prepared to pay up to 20 per cent more for Siemens products because their technological sophistication was worth it.

But as the deutschmark gained in strength the price gap widened. A company spokesman points out that even with regard to the most sophisticated of products potential buyers are not prepared to accept price differences of 30 per cent or more.

Competition became even fiercer concerning the sale of products which are technically not superior to those offered by the competitors — among them electric motors, plugs and other mass-produced items.

The dollar weakness has been with us for too short a time to make it possible to assess its effects. But even so, the competitiveness of the United States on international markets has improved markedly. And so far as Siemens is concerned the detrimental effects are hardly offset by the fact that raw materials have become cheaper as a result of deutschmark strength.

Another company whose competitiveness has been adversely affected by the dollar weakness is Daimler-Benz.

According to a company spokesman this is particularly so where commercial vehicles are concerned. And although no exact figures are available as yet there can be no doubt that the consequences of the dollar plunge will impose a considerable additional burden.

The situation is somewhat different in the automobile sector since Daimler-Benz issues all invoices for automobiles in deutschmarks. But even so, the customers are becoming increasingly aware of the fact that they have to pay more and more for the deutschmarks needed to buy a car and it is quite obvious that some will draw their conclusions and opt for another make of car.

But this contingency has not yet arisen in the automobile business. Only in certain limited markets — as for instance in Northern Europe — has it become a bit more difficult to conclude deals; but this is due to economic rather than monetary reasons. And yet, even on these highly competitive markets the cheap dollar is beginning to make itself felt.

Although the purchase volume of Daimler-Benz — amounting to about DM 20,000 million per annum — is concentrated primarily on the domestic market, the proportion of imports is growing. But even so the savings resulting from the deutschmark strength are strictly limited.

This is quite different in raw-material-intensive industries. *August Thyssenhütte*, for instance, imports a great deal of raw materials and these purchases have become cheaper as the dollar weakened. A number of the Group's experts are at present trying to assess the exact effects of the latest developments on the foreign exchange markets. Cheaper imports are obviously offset by increasing difficulties on the export front.

Many of the Group's products are invoiced in dollars — especially in the steel sector.

But it is virtually impossible to obtain higher prices that would offset the dollar erosion on the highly competitive steel markets. On the contrary, price concessions to the tune of up to 10 per cent have to be made in many instances.

The Group now pins its hopes on a recent statement by the US deputy secretary of the treasury, Mr Solomon, who announced guideline prices for steel which would hike the steel price in the United States.

These new prices could somewhat compensate for the dollar weakness — at least where business with the US is concerned.

Gutehoffnungshütte sees things in a rather more bleak light. This company sells finished products, and 70 per cent of its exports go to EEC countries while 26 per cent are sold in Latin America.

The management has recently observed a considerable reticence among buyers, especially when invoices are issued in deutschmarks.

Competition has clearly become stiffer. US companies which used to to concentrate on the American market are now placing more and more emphasis on exports.

Japan is subsidising exports and undercutting market prices by a considerable margin. They usually ask potential buyers about the price quoted by *Gutehoffnungshütte* and then offer the same product between 10 and 30 per cent cheaper.

East Bloc manufacturers also tend to undercut *Gutehoffnungshütte* prices by between 5 and 10 per cent.

Up to now, *Gutehoffnungshütte* has always successfully overcome such practices by quality, service and reliability. But if they are to continue to do so they will have to invest even more than hitherto in research and development in order to remain innovative.

Companies which made use of the cheap dollar during the past few years and built production plants in the United States are clearly at an advantage. One of these is the chemical giant *Bayer*.

Says *Bayer's* finance manager, Franz-Josef Weitkamper: "Over there the wage costs are in many instances lower than in Germany, so we have every reason to be satisfied about having our plants in the United States."

These plants do not only supply the American market but also export from the United States.

With it all, the dollar weakness has affected even *Bayer*. Sixty per cent of the Leverkusen company's products are exported.

Comments Weitkamper: "We meet with competition on all markets."

Forty per cent of exports are invoiced in foreign currencies, and only between 80 and 85 per cent have safety clauses against exchange rate fluctuations.

Only *Volkswagen* can view the dollar weakness with equanimity. VW's board of directors now realises how wise it was to establish the "Rabbit" assembly plant in the United States.

The strength which the deutschmark acquired after this decision is no longer such a threat as it was at a time when VW exported some 500,000 vehicles per annum to the United States.

In 1973 it was still considered a reliable rule of thumb that every pfennig's drop in the dollar exchange rate entailed an annual loss of between 15 and 20 million deutschmarks.

Today, with only 300,000 cars being exported to the United States, one pfennig less in the dollar exchange rate means a loss of a mere five million deutschmarks.

The Rabbit's production in the United States is due to begin in April 1978; and a company spokesman intimated that a continued weakness of the dollar could induce VW to begin production earlier.

But VW, too, is concerned about developments on other foreign markets. If the French franc, the Italian lira and the British pound are drawn into the dollar vortex business with those countries is bound to suffer.

And VW makes no bones about the fact that this could harbour certain structural dangers since Japan is advancing on Europe's export markets and since even European competitors could conceivably offer price advantages.

Assembly abroad is no solution since the volume of the national markets is too small. Says a VW executive: "We must still export from Germany and are thus under foreign exchange pressure."

The situation in the Middle East is quite different. The demand there is growing and the Japanese are using price cutting as a vehicle to gain a foothold. This has induced VW to embark on negotiations about assembly plant projects with Iraq, Iran, Syria, Algeria and Egypt.

Generally speaking, VW's position on all export markets is strong enough to enable it to invoice only in deutschmarks.

The continued erosion of the dollar has hit the various branches of business in different ways. But one thing can be taken for sure: The old remedy of charging a little bit more abroad if the going at home was tough no longer works. The increasingly fierce competition resulting from developments on the foreign exchange markets has made it impossible to offset domestic losses by higher prices abroad.

The immediate consequence of this situation will be that profits will diminish, although this will — at least initially — have no effect on the employment situation. But there is also a good side to this dilemma inasmuch as business will be forced to maintain or even enhance its technical advantage over competitors.

Rudolf Herlt

(Die Zeit, 23 December 1977)

Continued from page 6

vernment has this faith. As a result, it has gone to the very limits of its possibilities in order to provide additional impulses for economic growth in 1978. The Council of Economic Advisers confirmed this in their annual report. I hope and expect that labour, management and consumers will make use of the opportunities offered to them. I wish for a lively investment activity on the part of business, commonsense on the price front, sensible decisions on the wage front, a perfectly normal attitude on the part of the consumers and as few disturbances as possible on the world markets. We should adhere to the social consensus which sets our country apart from any others. In doing so, we will create a stable basis for the solution of the tasks which will confront us on the labour market beyond the year 1978. I have resolved to contribute all in my power towards fulfilling this economic and social obligation.

(Die Welt, 24 December 1977)

■ RESEARCH

Spacelab project may prove financial sellout for Europe

Did somebody blunder in negotiating the terms of the Spacelab agreement with the United States? Anatol Johansen, writing in Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, argues that America has secured Spacelab's services virtually free of charge, leaving Europe in general and this country in particular to foot the bill.

Space research in this country and, up to a point, in Western Europe as a whole has been inconsistent, pursuing a zig'zig course that would long since have sent a privately managed company to the wall.

Yet since space research is financed, for the most part, from the taxpayer's pocket no one has seen fit to acknowledge the consequences or to accept responsibility.

This malaise has been with us for some time, but have staff or financial or other conclusions been drawn as a result? They have not.

In 1972 this country, under the aegis of Klaus von Dohnanyi at the Ministry of Research and Technology, was instrumental in bringing about the cancellation of the Europa rocket project.

Over a period of years the Europa rocket had cost Britain, France and this country more than 2,000 million deutschmarks.

Yet did policymakers then see fit to undertake a thorough review or even to base their decisions on a more rational outlook? Far from it. They went ahead with a fresh mistake of catastrophic dimensions.

Politicians in this country with a space research brief, including Herr von Dohnanyi, urged Europe to construct a manned spacelab in the expectation of thereby gaining access to the construction and design of the US Space Shuttle and the latest in rocket technology.

This hope was soon dashed. The Americans were keen to use the European Spacelab as a Space Shuttle payload and to conduct experiments of their own. Period.

This country, however, was mad about the Spacelab — a claim to which the financing of the project pays eloquent testimony.

There are ten member-countries of the European Space Agency but Bonn is footing more than half the bill of a project that will cost yet another thousand million deutschmarks and more of the taxpayer's money.

Spacelab currently accounts for the lion's share of this country's space research budget, and a number of critics regret that so little is left for space research activities of Bonn's own.

Spacelab, on the other hand, will put European astronauts into orbit. It will also, or so its supporters hope, pave the way for the manufacture of certain materials in outer space.

It is all the more lamentable that such a stupendous mistake was made by Europe when the Spacelab agreement was concluded with the United States.

Since the Spacelab will cost taxpayers in this country more than 500 million deutschmarks and is to be placed at America's disposal free of charge Bonn might reasonably be expected to have urged that research and industry here derive maximum benefit from our laboratory in outer space.

Spacelab will remain attached to the US Space Shuttle and return with it to Earth for reuse in a number of missions over a number of years.

What would have been more to the point in the circumstances than to demand from the United States, in return for supplying Spacelab free of charge, that this country and others in Europe be allowed to conduct experiments on board Spacelab free of charge?

Yet only the first Spacelab mission will be virtually free of charge. Thereafter Europe will only be able to use its own Spacelab for a fee of roughly twenty million dollars a time.

So, to all intents and purposes, Europe is paradoxically denied access to a research facility it itself has designed and built.

Neither industrial users, who are interested in possibly manufacturing certain materials in outer space and would like to conduct appropriate research, nor Scientific Research Ministries are in a position to pay Spacelab launching fees of this kind.

To crown it all, of course, trials need to be conducted over a number of missions to determine which alloys, say, can successfully be manufactured in outer space.

But the mission that will be undertaken free of charge is the first, which will largely be concerned with ensuring that Spacelab works, especially when linked with the Space Shuttle.

Thus during the maiden flight there will be less capacity available on board Spacelab for other experiments than in subsequent missions.

Which only goes to show what a cosmic blunder this country and Western Europe made when the terms were negotiated. But will heads roll? Not a bit of it!

The shape a Spacelab agreement between Europe and the United States might have taken is indicated by a US proposal for Spacelab II which is not yet the subject of official negotiations, it is only fair to add.

The Americans now suggest that Europe raises bank loans to construct a second Spacelab for delivery to the United States. Europe would then be allowed to conduct experiments on board Spacelab free of charge until America had paid for the space laboratory by launching Spacelab on board the Space Shuttle free of charge.

This way Europe would, at a rough estimate, get between thirty and fifty Spacelab launchings free of charge in return for supplying the capsule instead of, as under the terms of the present agreement, only one.

Anatol Johansen

(Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung für Deutschland, 21 December 1977)

Four would-be European astronauts shortlisted

Dutchman, Italian, Swiss or German — who will be Europe's first astronaut? Two thousand people originally applied to space research agencies in ten European countries to become Western Europe's first man or woman in outer space.

Four men have now been shortlisted by the European Space Agency in Paris. They are a Dutchman, an Italian, a Swiss and a 36-year-old Stuttgart physicist, Ulf Merbold.

All being well, one of the four will be on board Spacelab during its inaugural mission in 1980.



Originally six candidates were to be shortlisted, but two failed the final medicals. One of them was a Frenchwoman, incidentally, but no information is forthcoming as to why she was dropped at the last minute, as it were.

The remaining four payload experts, as they are officially termed, will strike up a closer acquaintanceship with Spacelab starting this January.

Spacelab, designed and built in Western Europe, is the first research facility of its kind to be devised for multiple use. It will be launched into outer space by US Space Shuttle, conduct a series of experiments in the cosmos and return to Earth for subsequent reuse.

The US National Aeronautics and Space Administration has yet to announce the names on its Spacelab shortlist. Applicants are still being put through their paces.

The four potential European astronauts are aged between 31 and thirty-six. Wubbo Johannes Ockels, 31, is a Dutch nuclear physicist. Franco Egidio Malerba, 31, is an Italian computer specialist. Claude Nicollier, 33, is a Swiss scientist on the payroll of the European Space Agency, Paris.

This country's Ulf Merbold, 36, is a research scientist at the Max Planck Institute, Stuttgart. He and the other three have successfully undergone any number of scientific, technological, psychological and medical tests.

Starting in January they will be trained for their space mission at Porz near Cologne, the headquarters of Spice, which stands for Spacelab Payload Integration nd Coordination Europe.

Towards the end of January they will be off to America for a week's medical trials at the Johnson Space Centre in Houston, Texas, where their suitability for the Space Shuttle flight will be probed.

In February the four would-be astronauts will then start to familiarise themselves with Spacelab in a programme that will take them to the Erno Spacelab centre in Bremen.

Erno is the main contractor for the Spacelab project, which is to cost an estimated $500 million, of which this country is to pay 52 per cent.

(Handelsblatt, 23 December 1977)

THE ARTS

Film-makers still lack box office success

West Berlin's 1977 *Berlinale* film festival magazine put it in black and white, mincing no words: "The German cinema has reached the end of its tether."

What Hans-Jürgen Syberberg, angry about the lack of interest in his Hitler film on the part of the critics, wrote in an open letter addressed to the media bosses was not the only note of this tenor sounded in 1977.

The voices of doom vacillated between self-pity and acerbic discord between the new blood among film-makers and the established old hands, and between self-critical doubt and genuine shock.

This pessimism is not belied by the fact that this year saw between seven and eight million more cinemagoers than did the previous one. The reason for this is quite simple: Due to the hot summer of 1976 only 115.1 million film aficionados bought cinema tickets (ten per cent fewer than in 1975). This loss was made up again in 1977 because of the rainy summer.

Thus the German film keeps hurtling downward, and its share on the domestic market (without co-productions) has dropped to less than five per cent.

The year began with a thunderclap. The Munich *Filmverlag der Autoren* (authors' film publishing house) was on the verge of going bust until last February when Rudolf Augstein (the publisher of the news magazine *Der Spiegel*) bought a 55-per-cent equity to the tune of DM600,000 this saving the company.

The bankruptcy of Cinerama Distributors, on the other hand, could not be averted. The same applies to the collapse of the Constantin Group. But Constantin was finally resuscitated by the beverage manufacturer Ludwig Eckes who administered a DM6 million booster shot, thus giving rise to new hope for the German film.

Commercially speaking, however, the German film remained in the stranglehold of American competition. But the surprising box office successes of Wim Wenders' *Amerikanischer Freund* (The American Friend) and Werner Herzog's *Stroszek* marked, if not a change, at least an attempt to reach the cinema going public.

Bernhard Sinkel and Alf Brustellin, having made *Lina Braake* and *Berlinger*, went even further to meet the public. Their film version of Manfred Bieler's *Mädchenkrieg* (War of the Girls) turned into luxuriously opulent cinema.

Like *Mädchenkrieg*, Helma Sanders' Kleist portrait *Heinrich*, Bernhard Wicki's *Eroberung der Zitadelle* (Conquest of the Citadel), Heidi Genee's first film *Grete Minde*, based on a story by Theodor Fontane and Aleksandar Petrovic's Böll adaptation *Gruppenbild mit Dame* (Group Portrait with Lady) received the Federal Film Prize — and mostly bad reviews. In any event, none of them was a success.

On the other hand, Niklaus Schilling's *Vertreibung aus dem Paradies* (Banishment from Paradise) received enthusiastic praise. But it was not the story of the down-and-out movie actor Andy which made the most film headlines in 1977 but that of Adolf Hitler.

Joachim Fest's *Hitler — eine Karriere* (Hitler — a Career) was accused of whitewashing and lauding tendencies — an accusation that can certainly not be levelled at Theodor Kotulla's *Aus einem deutschen Leben* (From a German Life). His biography of the Auschwitz commander Rudolf Hoess is relatively brittle, though sincere.

Rainer Werner Fassbinder's *Chinesisches Roulette* (Chinese Roulette) came into the limelight as a piece of film policy rather than as a film. With his statement: "I'd rather be a street-sweeper in Mexico than a film-maker in Germany" he joined the big emigration brouhaha.

But like Alexander Kluge, Fassbinder was unable to definitely make up his mind in favour of inner emigration.

Unfortunately, the necessary discussion about the cold blast that is hitting film-makers everywhere finally became no more than the hot air of headlines.

Some movement was engendered in the illustrious circle surrounding the sickbed of the German film; but in most instances this movement was no more than that of retreat.

Moreover, unity among loners in the film industry is as little pronounced as among their writing colleagues.

But this very unity is as necessary if creative scope is to be retained in hostile times as it is necessary if a viable commercial basis is to be achieved.

Since films made in this country are still too dependent on television they also cater more to the needs of the TV screen than to those of the cinema.

The Film Promotion Act which is due to expire next year must be amended. The German film industry association (SPIO), has recently demanded film promotion that would once more orientate itself by box office results.

For SPIO, which has subsidised 43 films with a total of DM15.3 million since 1974, this project promotion is a thorn in the flesh.

But the beneficiaries — in other words the representatives of the new German film — would like to lay their hands on the DM6.8 million available at present, while the SPIO is guarding the coffers with the fallacious argument, as film-makers see it, that new-wave films fall short on box-office success.

Peter Dyckhoff

(Münchner Merkur, 21 December 1977)

Schlöndorff to direct *Tin Drum*

Close to two decades after its publication in 1959, Günter Grass' bestseller *The Tin Drum* is still occupying the minds and imagination of film-makers.

So far, however, all attempts at turning the voluminous novel into a film have failed before they got off the ground.

As Günter Grass himself said at a press conference in Berlin, this was partly due to circumstances and partly to the inadequacies of the interested parties.

Said Grass: "Some of them had not even read the novel while one of them took umbrage at the fact that Oskar Matzerath, the hero of the book, stopped growing at the age of three."

But the *Tin Drum* film project has now reached a concrete stage. Shooting from a script by Franz Seitz, after final editing by Frenchman Jean-Claude Carriere and this country's Volker Schlöndorff, is to begin at the latest in the spring or summer of 1978.

The producer will be Seitz and the director Schlöndorff. The mother will be played by Angela Winkler and the dwarf Oskar in all probability by David Bennent, the son of actor Heinz Bennent.

The film, which is to be a co-production with Radio Hesse, is to cost between six and seven million deutschmarks.

The studio shots will probably be done in Berlin and location work will take place along the shores of the Baltic in Normandy and — if permission can be obtained from the Polish authorities — in Danzig.

Until recently there was only one man whom Grass could visualise as a potential director of *The Tin Drum*: Poland's Andrzej Wajda. But political conditions put paid to any possible deal.

In search of an alternative director who could do the job, Grass finally latched onto Volker Schlöndorff. But the latter was initially reluctant to agree.

Says Schlöndorff: "I initially rejected the idea because I couldn't see how something that supposedly couldn't work for so long should suddenly become feasible."

But having once more carefully delved into the novel, Schlöndorff accepted.

Comments the director: "This story calls for a bookkeeper or an artisan rather than a genius . . . and I consider myself an artisan. Having accepted the job I now view it as an enormous challenge and I'm enough of an optimist to be certain that I'll be able to meet the challenge."

For Carriere, the scriptwriter for Buñuel and Malle, *The Tin Drum*, which he read several times in French, is, as he put it: "A new voice from Germany which left a deep impression within me. It has taught me a great deal about Germany."

In his *Tin Drum* Grass writes about the petty bourgeoisie, the "class nobody cares about," saying: "There was no law of nature whereby the petty bourgeoisie had to go fascist. Things could just as well have worked out differently. But they were left in the lurch by both capital and the proletariat.

"And yet, where did this class originate? It either came from the proletariat or from the countryside. Essentially the petty bourgeoisie is a very productive class. In fact, I myself stem from it."

Hellmut Kotschenreuther

(Kieler Nachrichten, 17 December 1977)

Transtel sells German TV overseas

A voluminous work has just been sent off to 180 TV stations in Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean. It is the 1977/78 programme catalogue of *Transtel*, a subsidiary of *Deutsche Welle*, this country's short-wave world radio service, based in Cologne. The main shareholders of *Transtel* are the government and this country's TV networks.

Transtel distributes German TV material in the Third World, thus engaging in German cultural policy by means of education and science programmes.

What do the recipient nations, which receive the films either entirely free of charge or against a token payment, want to see now that a number of Western nations are once more stressing the "Ugly German" even in the Third World?

In order to find an answer to this question, *Transtel* organised a programme seminar in Tunisia at the beginning of December which was attended by representatives of 25 African and Arab TV stations.

Says Laura Gläser-Weisser, who is in charge of the distribution department for Africa and the Caribbean at the Cologne head office:

"They want educational, scientific and technical programmes but expressly without a heavy-handed German tie-up that would make such films tantamount to PR work."

The series "The Human Body," which was shown on Bavaria's third TV channel, is the top runner, having been viewed on 52 million TV screen in the areas serviced by *Transtel*.

Curiously enough, even countries with minimal automobile traffic are avid watchers of a programmed called "The Seventh Sense" which is aimed at traffic education.

And even more curious is the fact that this series which places heavy emphasis on driving in snow conditions, enjoys great popularity in countries where snow is an unknown phenomenon.

It has been established that the popularity of this series is attributable to its "German background" — although this must be presented with the greatest possible circumspection.

There can be little doubt that, because of this very circumspection in the presentation of Germany, this country ranks top among the providers of such programmes (the United States, Britain, France and Italy).

For as long as the memory of the 1974 soccer World Cup win remains alive, this sport will serve as a vehicle by which to transport German culture to the Third World.

Let us list but one example to evidence this: *Transtel's* English announcer is a Welshman by the name of Toby Charles, a man with a particularly sonorous voice. He is also the announcer for the *Transtel* version of "It's a Knockout."

One day after a soccer game Toby Charles muttered more to himself than to his audience: "I wonder if Mönchengladbach will win the next game as well?" This resulted in a flood of 3,000 letters from all parts of the world in the weeks that followed.

If the Federal Republic of Germany is to draw attention to itself on this difficult market in connection with any particular problem it must proceed with the greatest of caution.

While the series *Trenck* which is about to become a hit among the 180 TV stations on the mailing list is an excellent vehicle with which to convey some basic facts of German history, *Transtel* steers clear of anything involving the issue of terrorism except in connection with the background material for news programmes which is prepared jointly with *dpa*.

Fifty stations make use of about half the fifteen weekly mini stories of two and a half minutes' duration each — with Senegal taking all of them.

Eberhard Nitschke

(Die Welt, 22 December 1977)

WRITERS

Tribute to sixty-year-old laureate Heinrich Böll

Heinrich Böll owes his first successes to his two novels "The Train was on Time" and *Wo warst du, Adam?* Both these works depicted the travails of German life during and after World War Two.

The author was 30 at that time, having published his first short stories in newspapers and magazines when he was in his mid-twenties. He had experienced the War and was thoroughly familiar with its disastrous consequences.

Before the War, he was apprenticed to a bookstore, and after 1945 he studied German literature for a while, subsequently working as a carpenter and, for a short time, as a civil servant.

He celebrated his sixtieth birthday on 21 December.

Böll's realistic way of writing, which is entirely free of frills and experiments and which seizes upon everyday problems, has remained unchanged to this day.

Initially he depicted the War, then the post-war era with its famine and rubble. His novels and short stories deal with the housing shortage, disappointment and the spiritual void as witnessed by his novel "Acquainted with the Night." Other topics were women without men and men without women, as in *Haus ohne Hüter* (house without a guardian), to mention but two examples in which he dealt with moral depravity and adherence to eroded ethical values.

Böll's books are set in the milieu of simple people. The reader finds it easy to identify with such characters, and the author's prose is simple and unadorned, which adds to its literary value.

"The Bread of our Early Years" and "Billiards at Half Past Nine" as well as the collections of short stories such as *Wanderer, kommst du nach Spa* (when you come to the spa, wanderer) and "Group Portrait with Lady" are out and out masterpieces.

But there is also another type of Böll narrative, ranging from the early work *Schwarze Schafe* (black sheep) to *Nicht nur zur Weihnachtszeit* (not only at Christmastime) and the short vignettes collected in the volume *Doktor Murkes gesammeltes Schweigen* (Doctor Murke's collected silences). All these works get under the reader's skin with the meaningful seriousness of grotesque narrative.

There has never been any cynicism in Böll's works although they are full of a wholesome though bitter humour as in his "Irish Diary" or "The Clown."

The latter work reveals yet another plane, namely that of Christian ethics. He stands up for his faith, both matter-of-factly and critically, as evidenced not only by the central character of "The Clown," Hans Schnier, but also by his essays of which "Letter to a Young Catholic" is most indicative.

Böll has frequently bared the weak



Heinrich Böll

points of Church and clergy without ever infringing on anybody's dignity.

It is this very attitude which is indicative of Böll's works as a whole, not only vis-a-vis the Churches but also vis-a-vis other institutions.

He is an anti-fascist, anti-militarist, nonconformist and opponent of the Establishment without ever having become a radical.

In his later publications such as "The Lost Honour of Katharina Blum" or *Bericht zur Gesinnungslage der Nation* (reports on the nation's views) he does not shirk taking a stand on delicate issues and picking up hot irons.

Böll is read throughout the world, in East and West and particularly in America. He was awarded the Literature Nobel Prize in 1972; and a complete five-volume edition of his works has just been published, marking his sixtieth birthday.

Will Jacobs

(Kieler Nachrichten, 21 December 1977)

Visa for East Berlin author

The forty-year old East German writer Jurek Becker has left the GDR and has been staying in West Berlin since the beginning of December, it has only just come to light.

Becker, whose family still lives in East Berlin, will, according to a press release by the Suhrkamp publishing house in Frankfurt, spend six months working at a university in Ohio, USA. Subsequently he will return to the Federal Republic of Germany to finish a volume of short stories on which he is working at present.

The GDR authorities have issued Becker with an exit visa for a "prolonged stay" in the West.

In an interview with *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* the author said that this visa was not contingent upon his "behaving himself in the West" and keeping mum about his convictions.

But on the other hand, Becker said, he has not come to the Federal Republic of Germany in order to "open his trap here."

Although it is conceivable that he might return to the GDR, there is little likelihood of it considering the problems he has latterly had with GDR authorities.

In 1976, Jurek Becker was the only GDR writer to publicly protest against the expulsion of the poet Reiner Kunze from the East German Writers Association. He also voiced his protest against the GDR's stripping Wolf Biermann of his citizenship.

When the Socialist Unity Party thereupon expelled the winner of the 1975 national prize he demonstratively renounced his own membership in the East German Writers Association.

In an interview given to the news magazine *Der Spiegel* last July, Becker said: "To remain silent would presuppose that the Party essentially pursues the same aims as I do, and my conviction that this is so has become pretty shaky."

The result was that his books suddenly disappeared from GDR bookstores and that a film script which has been accepted by Defa remained on the shelf. Moreover, Becker was unable to find a publisher for his latest novel.

Jurek Becker's most famous and best books are based on his own experiences as a child in the Warsaw Ghetto.

Jurek Becker (Photos: dpa)

The novel *Jakob der Lügner* (Jacob the liar), 1970, tells a story which is both tragic and comical. The ghetto denizen Jakob happens to overhear a news item on the radio of an SS soldier, according to which Russian troops were advancing towards the West.

For the ghetto inhabitants who are lined up for slave labour every day this news is a harbinger of hope. And because this is so a friend whom Jakob tells about it refuses to believe him. In order to prove the truth of his report, Jakob resorts to a lie, saying that he owns a radio.

Due to his lie, Jakob is forced to invent new reports every day in order to justify his fame as the only owner of a radio in the ghetto.

The lies prove a blessing because they prevent many of the desperate people from committing suicide. But in the end Jakob keeps contradicting himself and is revealed as a man who was made a hero on the basis of his lies.

The novel *Der Boxer* (the boxer), 1976, continues where *Jakob der Lügner* stopped. The new Aron Blank survives both the ghetto and the concentration camp, and in the early fifties he embarks on a new life in East Berlin.

What both novels have in common is that they describe the real power of the unreal. In the one instance the factual power of a lie and, in the other, the demons of the past which overshadow all attempts at starting a new life.

Jurek Becker, who also wrote the autobiographical novel *Irreführung der Behörden* (misleading of authorities), which was published in 1973, is no doubt one of the most talented writers of the German tongue.

Humour and grace of style characterise his prose as does the combination of linguistic precision and human commitment on behalf of the weak and downtrodden of our world.

Mathias Schreiber

(Kölner Stadt-Anzeiger, 20 December 1977)

Frankfurt honours Oskar Maria Graf

A Frankfurt exhibition honours the memory of writer Oskar Maria Graf. The exhibition comprises books, newspaper and magazine articles, letters, photographs and various other documents, making up a mosaic of a writer who liked to dub himself a "provincial author" but who at the same time rejected the political parochialism such a term might imply.

Oskar Maria Graf belonged to a spiritually much older nineteenth century than the year of his birth, 1894, would seem to indicate.

No similarly comprehensive exhibition has ever been devoted to the life of this man.

The objects on exhibit reveal gaiety, a lust for the comical and — surprisingly to many viewers — humour.

Graf's proletarianism is unmistakable — especially in the exhibits marking his Munich days when, destitute, he tried to make his way as a writer and joined the anarchist circles around Landauer and Mühsam and the so-called Bavarian *Räterepublik* (council republic) which Graf



Oskar Maria Graf (Photo: IP)

experienced both as a participant and as an eyewitness.

The exhibition clearly reveals the confusion and the problems that governed his life — a life that was destined to fight fascism and that forced him into exile in Vienna, Brno (Czechoslovakia) and New York.

The close and gratifying cooperation between the archives of New Hampshire University which houses his legacy, the Bavarian State Library in Munich and the Department for Emigré Literature of the German Library in Frankfurt have made this comprehensive exhibition possible.

It is much more difficult today to amass such a literary exhibition than it is to arrange spectacular art exhibitions, due to insurance problems. It is therefore more than praiseworthy that the three institutions concerned have overcome the usual selfishness of archivists.

Oskar Maria Graf always prided himself on his originality. He was always the jester inclined towards Don Quixotesque attitudes, with an enormous gift for spontaneity.

A photograph from the First World War, for which he posed together with his comrades, shows him looking dumb and foxy at the same time.

To a Munich art dealer he offered a number of portraits of himself painted

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■ MEDICINE

Psychological after-effects of abortion underestimated, Hanover survey claims



Abortion law reform has been endlessly discussed in recent years but the psychological effect of abortion seems to have been overlooked. It was generally assumed that psychological effects, if any, would be favourable.

The fallacy of such an attitude has now been borne out by the assessment of statistics of the world's total relevant bibliography on this subject.

According to this study, between four and nine per cent of women who have a legal abortion must expect severe and prolonged or chronic side effects; another fifteen to 25 per cent show slight psychological damage, usually lasting no more than a few weeks.

The magnitude of such damage in absolute figures can only be estimated on the basis of the fact that, statistically, between twenty and fifty per cent of women in this country have at least one abortion (usually legally) in the course of their lives.

In view of this situation it is surprising that even psychiatrists know very little about the incidence of psychological side-effects following abortion.

In the realm of psychoanalytical therapy involving thousands of cases in this country, abortion — be it legal or illegal — plays no role; and this applies even more to society as a whole.

Professor Peter Petersen, head of the Work Group for Group Work and Psychotherapy at Hanover Medical School, in cooperation with Dr W. Buck, the author of the above-mentioned study, had his to say on the subject in the medical journal *Deutsches Ärzteblatt:*

"If even in the protected sphere of a psychoanalytical therapy encompassing 120 hours (two and a half years) an emotion-laden complex can be successfully suppressed, how much more taboo must this issue become in the general collective consciousness — notwithstanding the fact that on the surface of our consciousness abortion is no more than a topic of social small talk."

The study is based on 28 completed psychiatric and psychological collections of cases histories from the years 1948 to 1974, encompassing 2,771 women. The periods between surgery and the last check ranged between two days and fourteen years.

The case histories under review were gathered primarily from Switzerland, Scandinavia, Britain and the United States. There are virtually no cases from the Federal Republic of Gennany.

The fact that only 28 individual surveys were included in the study is due to the specific demands placed on the examination methods in order to render the individual cases comparable.

Among the chronic psychological disturbances following abortion are, above all, depressive personality developments with self-accusation and guilt complexes about a decision considered wrong by the patient. There are also fears of infertility, sexual phobias and various psychosomatic symptoms resulting from unresolved conflicts.

Virtually nothing is to be learned about the effects of abortion on the future development of person-to-person relations.

Women who have come to terms and managed to cope with abortion usually react to it by feeling relieved and contented without pangs of conscience.

Psychiatric complaints in cases where they resulted from unwanted pregnancy usually show a rapid improvement following abortion. Especially depressive women consider it a great relief to be able to delegate to the doctor at least part of the burden of having to make a decision.

The study also delved into the conditions and reasons why abortions have such widely differing effects on various individuals. It turned out that religious ties and social isolation promote psychological disturbances following an abortion.

Among those particularly prone to psychological disturbances of any kind are motherly women and those who have been talked into abortion by other rather than having done so on their own initiative.

The prognosis is more favourable in the case of feeble-minded, emotionally robust or well-balanced personalities with little motherliness. The same applies to those who are emotionally immature or those with a clear motivation and this determination to abort.

In other words, the less influence from the outside and the more the abortion is embarked upon as a result of the woman's own decision, the more favourable will the emotional consequences be.

Professor Petersen writes: "The fact that mature personalities with pronounced motherliness find it more difficult to cope with abortion than infantile women must be taken as an indication that post-operative emotional conflicts have their roots not only in psychological disturbances prior to the abortion but also in a conspicuous awareness of the patient's own creativity and her greater ability to delve into her experiences."

The assessments of the various studies provide no clue as to the criteria by which a doctor can diagnose that an abortion is advisable.

In any event, it would seem that the criteria provided for by the law disregard psychological development and the fact that there is a whole range of factors from social via medical to psycho-social and purely psychiatric, and that the social factors indicating the advisability of terminating pregnancy evidently entail the least post-operative psychological problems.

(Kieler Nachrichten, 22 December 1977)

Frankfurt honours Oskar Maria Graf

Continued from page 11

by Karl Wähmann for an exhibition of the various styles of modern art in order to make mock of the experts' esoteric talk about avant garde.

At the first All-Union Congress of Writers in the Soviet Union in 1934 he showed up in knee socks and short *lederhosen* to demonstrate that his Bavarian homeland went with him wherever he went. He thus tried to parody Thomas Mann who had at that time said that Germany was where he was.

The honorary doctorate which was awarded to Graf in the United States was also viewed in a comical light by the author.

There are many documents dating back to that time at the Frankfurt exhibition. It is as if Oskar Maria Graf had been rediscovered with all his realism, with his trust in simplicity and his struggle against all conventions, his socialist understanding of himself and of the world, which refused to subjugate itself to any party or faction.

The exhibition also demonstrates that this nonconformist realism stems from the author's own experience.

The documents on exhibit also make it obvious that our assessment of the author is governed by slogans and the acclaim of his contemporaries, among them Thomas and Heinrich Mann, Lion Feuchtwanger and even Albert Einstein. Had it not been for them, the literature about him would fit onto a very small bookshelf indeed.

It seems obvious that Graf has not yet become the subject of literary research. At least, there can be no other explanation for the fact that there was not a single student from the neighbouring university in evidence at the exhibition.

Wilfried F. Schoeller

(Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung für Deutschland, 27 December 1977)

Immune response: genetic trigger identified

Genetic factors play a much greater role than hitherto assumed — not only with regard to hereditary diseases but also with regard to many infections.

This, is any event, is the surprising conclusion arrived at by doctors and immunologists who have delved deeply into the question when and why bodies tend to reject transplants.

During the presentation ceremony of the 1977 Robert Koch Prize in Bonn recently, the two prize-winners, Professor Jean Dausset of Paris and Johannes J. van Rood of Leiden, provided insights into a field of medicine which is likely to gain more and more in importance both in connection with transplantations and in connection with malignant tumours.

It has always been a mystery why certain people survive epidemics while others fall prey to them. Neither age nor sex nor religion nor social status provide any clues to this phenomenon.

Even the development of the body's own defence mechanism against infection has proved to be of secondary importance in this regard.

Although it has been established that very young children and elderly people are less immune than adults in their prime because their immunological system is either not yet fully developed or no longer entirely active, and that undernourished people — especially those suffering from protein shortage — are less resistant than others, all these elements provide no adequate explanation as to why seemingly perfectly healthy people succumb to epidemics while others survive.

Professor van Rood pointed out in Bonn that these phenomena must have a genetic explanation.

Tests with rabbits, mice and guinea pigs, he said, proved that all mammals had genes which enable them to rally immunological forces more readily than animals without such genes.

There are meanwhile also indications that the same applies to Man.

It has meanwhile been established by means of complicated biochemical tests and with the help of computers that the so-called "small arm" of the sixth pair of chromosomes (the human being has a total of 23 such pairs) houses and controls the development of transplantation anti-genes — HLA for short. This control centre is in the final analysis the determining factor concerning the survival or otherwise of an implant.

The more the HLA anti-genes between donor and recipient coincide the better are the chances that the foreign tissue will not be rejected.

Research into the HLA anti-genes has long been stimulated by the hope that simple tests of cell tissues would make it possible to overcome the immunological barrier in connection with transplantations.

It turned out, however, that the HLA system is considerably more complicated than originally assumed. Thus, for instance, the genes of the command centre in the small arm of the sixth pair of chromosomes in all likelihood controls the synthesis of other anti-genes and thus the immunological reaction of an organism.

The HLA system thus acquires a biological importance which goes far beyond the immunological rejection of a transplant.

In other words, the HLA system fulfils a fundamental function in the resistence against infections — a function which has hitherto largely been ignored. But by the same token the HLA system can also promote predispositions for certain diseases.

The insights latterly gained into genetic predisposition for diseases is likely to lead to practical consequences in the therapeutic sector within the next few years.

Professor Dausset named the following: For one thing, it could become possible to find a feasible solution for the problem of transplantation by inducing a specific tolerance for donor anti-genes.

Moreover, it is considered quite possible that it will become possible to accelerate the rejection of malignant tumours such as cancer.

And finally, specific diagnostic techniques could make it possible to recognise individuals who are particularly prone to a specific disease. This means that it would no longer be necessary to vaccinate everybody but that such prophylaxis could be restricted to particularly endangered persons.

Konrad Müller-Christiansen

(Frankfurter Rundschau, 17 December 1977)

■ OUR WORLD

Down and outs in Munich – few make it back into conventional society

Münchner Merkur

It was a week before Christmas in Munich. A group of tramps sat on a street corner in the city's busiest shopping district as people rushed by carrying parcels.

The tramps passed their wine bottles from one to the other, drunken human wrecks in a scene that gave rise to revulsion and aggression among those who witnessed it.

Some of the bystanders spoke of wasted taxpayer's money, other said that the police should do something and yet another one asked if a bit of help might not be in order.

But it is anything but easy to help in such a situation. "A ten-pfennig piece is particularly uncharitable since it only induces the tramp to buy himself the cheapest kind of liquor with which to drown his misery," says Alfred Heinle, a social worker and manager of the Catholic Mission for Men in Munich, which looks after the hobos and the homeless.

"It being Christmas time many feel inclined to give these poor fellows alms; but it would be much more important to show understanding and tolerance," Herr Heinle pointed out.

Scenes like the one just described are perhaps not the rule but there is nevertheless frequently disgruntlement in evidence whenever the average citizen is confronted with those who, in officialese, are described as "people of no fixed abode."

Only recently the citizens of Munich unsuccessfully protested against a new municipal home, saying that "we are prepared to contribute as much as you wish provided you locate the home elsewhere."

These protests concern men who have proven over the years that they are too old or too ill to start a new life on their own and who have therefore become a burden to our throwaway society.

According to estimates of the Ministry for Family Affairs, there are some 80,000 vagrants in the Federal Republic of Germany, and 5 per cent of them are women.

No studies as to the causes of the problem are as yet available — and what figures there are reflect only approximations. Some 15 per cent of the tramps suffer from severe organic diseases (liver, kidneys, tuberculosis or parasites) or are handicapped. About 40 per cent suffer from psychological disorders, 50 per cent are addicted (mostly to alcohol and in very rare instances to drugs), while 60 to 70 per cent are in danger of becoming addicted.

But all of those who have become homeless and have severed what ties they might have had must be considered psychologically handicapped in some way.

Our hobos come from all social strata, including academics. Many of them could be rehabilitated given the necessary therapeutic institutions, hospitals and homes.

Effective work must start with the smallest steps by leading the victim out of his general resignation and hopelessness.

This hopelessness is clearly in evidence at the Munich asylum for the homeless with its 396 beds. Hundreds of people who have no bed of their own are put up there like a piece of luggage in the left-luggage department of a railway station. Each room has 18 double-decker beds with disinfected blankets and blue checked linen. Says one of the hobos: "It's almost as cosy as in gaol... but not so safe."

On every winter night there are some 50 to 60 men waiting in vain to be allocated one of the beds at DM2 apiece.

At 10.00 p.m., when even the anteroom is overcrowed with vagrants (the sick and lame are permitted to sleep there on benches) all the others who have been unable to secure a bed must leave and try to find a place to sleep elsewhere.

It is anything but romantic to sleep under a bridge – especially in winter. This is borne out by the fact that the first applicants for a bed pitch up at 4.00 p.m. and that at 8.00 p.m., which is curfew time for residents, others are waiting for a vacancy arising from the fact that somebody has failed to "come home." Any permanent bed is considered vacated if the occupant has failed to report back for three days.

Many consider the asylum a surrogate home — notwithstanding the fact that they have to surrender their own clothing in the basement where they are issued blue uniform pyjamas.

Complains one hobo: "They say that I have lice; but where would I have got them?"

The protest remains unavailing and he has to go to the delousing station.

Women are in a somewhat better position. They live in small and not overcrowded social welfare homes, receive some money once in a while and at times they are even issued with a voucher for a boarding house.

Are men harder to rehabilitate? Laments Alfred Heinle: "Considering the degrading circumstances, this is certainly so."

It is therefore planned to reduce the number of beds and to transfer those hobos who can be rehabilitated to specialised homes. But so far only one such home has been approved by the authorities.

This means that in the meantime they will continue to hang around the staircases in their blue pyjamas and to crowd the dining rooms. Alcohol is barred from the home. But as one of them put it: "We just step outside if we want to booze it up."

And there is hardly a problem there since there are numerous small pubs around the home.

Says the receptionist of the home, a diamond in the rough who is never at a loss for a kind word for his charges: "Those who stay too long with us drop even deeper."

The receptionist is constantly worried about the new ones to whom he has assigned a bed. Among them there are people who are simply "transients" – seamen and jobless who just want to give Munich a try.

But one day they stop shaving and go on a binge with the others. After all, they must leave the home at 8.00 a.m. so that it can be cleaned.

Still, 80 per cent of the "guests" have a bed at least for a while. In fact, some have been living at the home for 20 years, among them an 84-year-old who moved in in 1959. Says he: "Where should I go? I belong here." Others work occasionally in the market hall or in city parks.

But there are social differences even in the home. On the first floor there are the new arrivals, the drunks who can be found lying in their own vomit in the morning. On the third floor there are the old "residents" who have made it and whom the home employs as cleaners, etc.

One of these has been successfully rehabilitated. He is a 44-year-old man and a natural talent as a marathon runner who has run 100 kilometres in 17 hours. His room is decorated with prizes from his seven itinerant years. Says he: "If only I had known earlier what talents there are in me."

Irmi Schwartz

(Münchner Merkur, 20 December 1977)

Hijack victims still have nightmares

For Gisela Fischer, housewife from Hanover, the way to the bank has become nightmarish. Says Frau Fischer: "I look closely at everybody who enters the bank, thinking to myself 'Now you've had it'."

Frau Fischer, together with her sons Marcel, 14, and Stefan, 10, occupied a middle seat on the hijacked Lufthansa plane that was so sensationally freed at Mogadishu a few months ago.

Gabriele Canellas, 18, a student from Palma de Mallorca, trembles every time the doorbell rings. She sat in one of the front rows of the aircraft and had to watch how the captain, Jürgen Schumann, was shot dead by the leader of the hijackers.

The father of Gabriele, Horst Canellas, formerly president of the Offenbach Kickers football club, also a passenger on the skyjacked jet, has been suffering from a mysterious diarrhoea ever since Mogadishu.

Dorothea Selter, 25, a housewife, locks herself in when her husband goes to work. She is afraid of a revenge by the backers of the skyjacking.

Two months after the apparently successful end to the most spectacular skyjacking in the history of aviation the freed hostages are still trying to forget. But the struggle against memory overtaxes most of them.

The nights are the worst, when most of the victims have to resort to pills.

Says Dorothea Selter: "It's always the same. I see the face of the hijackers' leader Mahmoud, then comes as shot and a body topples. It is at that moment that I wake up sweating."

In other countries such as Holland and the United States freed hostages receive psychotherapeutic care in order to prevent lasting psychological damage. But in the Federal Republic of Germany they are left alone with their nightmares.

Horst Canellas is shocked at the change the skyjacking has wrought in his daughter. The teenager is suddenly fear-ridden and can no longer stand being alone. She now sleeps in the same room with her sister in order to have somebody around when she wakes up from her nightmares.

Canellas cannot understand that the Federal government has not offered to provide psychiatric treatment for the hostages.

He himself also had problems to overcome. But he solved them in his own way. Plagued by insomnia, he went to Palma de Mallorca early in December and took a Lufthansa flight back to Frankfurt along the same route on which he had been skyjacked six weeks earlier.

When the airliner reached the point at which Captain Mahmoud, as he called himself, took over the earlier flight, his hands were sweaty with excitement.

But on landing in Frankfurt Horst Canellas had conquered his fear.

Said he: "I owed this not only to myself and to my family but also to the valiant Lufthansa crew. They were the real heroes in that affair."

Gisela Fischer, who had to protect her two sons on the skyjacked aircraft and who, therefore had no time for a breakdown, finds the pondering of the events in retrospect much more traumatic than the retelling of the story immediately after the freeing of the hostages.

At that time the dominant feeling was that of happiness about the outcome of it all. But today she feels the whole impact of the danger. Says she: "I still feel that something dreadful will happen."

The way she sees it, she is unlikely to be able to fly again in the next few years. She does not feel that a psychiatrist could help her. Instead, she believes that she must learn to cope with the situation on her own.

In fact, most of the former hostages feel that they must cope with their experience without outside help.

Dorothea Selter is cautious when speaking about her tormentors on the aircraft. The passengers were warned by the terrorists that those who gave away details would be executed. She already fears that she has said too much and whenever she leaves the house she looks out for suspicious cars.

The constant fear has changed Frau Selter's everyday life. She refuses to be alone, and when her husband had to go back to work after the Mogadishu incident she suffered a nervous breakdown.

Now, whenever he leaves the house, she locks the door after him and draws the curtains. Although she takes less pills than in the first weeks after the skyjacking, she is still unable to be alone and to look at the events with equanimity. She has heard about the psychiatric care in similar cases in Holland and the United States and says that she would avail herself of such a therapy if it were available here.

Elisabeth Müller, 46, from Hanover is the self-assured type. When retelling the Mogadishu events to journalists she made a composed impression on TV. But today, eight weeks later, she must force herself to take her dog for an evening stroll.

It will take a long time before the victims of the skyjacking will be able to lead normal lives again.

Hans Hellmuth Kannenberg

(Kölner Stadt-Anzeiger, 21 December 1977)

■ SPORT

1977 Sportsman of the Year awards



Sportsman of the Year Dietrich Thurau and Sportswoman Eva Wilms at Baden-Baden (Photo: dpa)

Dietrich Thurau, Sportsman of the Year, rode into the presentation ceremony at Baden-Baden's exclusive *Kursaal* on a red racing bicycle, his features tanned from a holiday in the sun.

Invited guests applauded, cheered and admired this country's hero of the Tour de France and runner-up in the road-racing world championships at San Cristobal, Venezuela.

He was wearing a made-to-measure dinner jacket and looking self-assured but, as "Didi" told his audience, was not expecting to be paid a fee for his services; indeed, he had brought money with him in case the Sportsman of the Year award might prove a purchasable commodity.

Thurau told the assembled company that he rated the award a highlight of his career. It was all very much what the audience wanted to hear.

When Dietrich Thurau starts chatting he has a number of tales to tell that are avidly heard by the sporting public.

Next year, he claims, is going to be his world championship year, followed in 1979 by a fresh attempt at the Tour de France. "Maybe," Thurau disarmingly said, "I can hold on to that lead next time."

The audience that gave him an ovation included 1966 Sportman of the Year Rudi Altig, a fellow-cyclist from Cologne (Thurau comes from Frankfurt).

Altig made use of the opportunity presented by the Baden-Baden gathering to enter into negotiations about kit for his Eddy Merckx team.

May this be taken to mean that the Sportsman, Woman and Team of the Year award ceremony is also something of a sports trade fair? Certainly not, says Kurt Dobbratz.

Dobbratz heads the *Internationale Sportkorrespondenz*, or international sports reporters' association, and is the man who invented and runs the annual award scheme. He is envied for having thought of the idea but not to be envied for having to organise the details year by year.

The award ceremony, Kurt Dobbratz says, is envisaged as a sporting family festival. It tends to be a somewhat exclusive affair because generous sponsors are members of the family.

Adidas, the track shoe, tracksuit and sportswear manufacturers, donated 25,000 deutschmarks to hire Max Greger and his band for the occasion.

Coca Cola and Segrean donated substantial sums to hire the Muchachos, who provided a musical foretaste of next year's soccer World Cup in Argentina, and singer Marion Brachet.

Baden-Baden tourist board, always keen to back an event that promises good publicity for the spa, contributed 40,000 deutschmarks towards the cost of the Alsatian buffet.

So far all attempts to make the award ceremony even more of a showtime occasion have failed mainly because Kurt Dobbratz rightly refuses to step down from the limelight.

In conjunction with Radio Luxembourg the organisers of the West German sporting press festival offered to hold the Sportsman of the Year award ceremony in Dortmund's Westfalenhalle. Dobbratz would hear nothing of the idea.

The men behind Munich's Supersportsman ceremony also made lucrative offers to take over the annual award event. Again, Kurt Dobbratz was not interested.

He reckons his idea of a sporting family festival is what the occasion requires, and it certainly continues to prove a roaring success, ending as ever not with the midnight snack consisting of potato soup, bread and beer but with a morning-after round of drinks at the Krokodil, Fritz Westermann's Baden-Baden restaurant.

This morning-after event has come to form a traditional part of the proceedings, and in keeping with tradition the fencers were there to hack to pieces a 100-lb loaf of Black Forest bread.

Kurt Dobbratz proudly noted that Bonn Interior Minister Werner Maihofer was in Baden-Baden for the third time but still had a while to go before he overtook Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher, who has attended the presentation ceremony five times.

Dobbratz was also gratified by the loyalty shown to the annual event by sporting stars of the past, such as cyclist Rudi Altig and field and track athletes Manfred Germar and Werner von Moltke, not to forget Olympic gold medallist Rosi Mittermaier, who was wearning a burgundy red trouser suit.

Rosi may not, for once, have been wearing skiing gear but she was still very much the modest, unassuming girl who won the hearts of viewers all over the world at the 1976 Innsbruck Winter Olympics.

In presenting the Sportswoman of the Year award to pentathlon ace Eva Wilms she made no attempt to hog the limelight, noting that "today's award-winners matter most."

Eva Wilms, who said she was a typical girl from the Ruhr region, made her peace with sports reporters at Baden-Baden. They did, after all, vote her Sportswoman of the Year.

"Now I know," she said, "that a majority do not share the view that I am merely a muscle pill wonder and the product of anabolic steroids."

She had been thinking of retiring but had now decided to carry on. "The award has been a tremendous boost," she admitted.

The Team of the Year were the national foil fencing squad, and this award came as a fitting tribute to sportsmen who have grown accustomed to being also-rans in the sporting publicity stakes.

Their team award was particularly gratifying for medalsmith Emil Beck, the Tauberbischofsheim hairdresser who coached the fencers all the way to the world championships.

The Sportsman of the Year awards are presented every year, so one or other of this year's winner may yet make a return to the Baden-Baden limelight.

Jupp Müller

(Kölner Stadt-Anzeiger, 17 December 1977)